THE

MORAL TALES

OF

M. MARMONTEL.

Tranſlated from the French

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CONTENTS

OF THE

THIRD VOLUME.

THE MORAL TALES OF M. MARMONTEL.

THE SYLPH-HUSBAND.

'AVOID the ſnares of men,' we are perpetually ſaying to young women: 'Avoid the ſeductions of women,' we are perpetually ſaying to young men. Do we think we are following the plan of nature, by making one ſex the enemy of the other? Are they formed only to hurt each other? Are they deſtined to fly one another? And what would be the fruits of theſe leſſons if both ſexes ſhould take them literally?

When Eliſa quitted the convent to go to the altar to eſpouſe the Marquis de Volange, ſhe was thoroughly perſuaded that, next to a lover,

the moſt dangerous being in nature was a huſband. Brought up by one of thoſe recluſe devotees, whoſe melancholy imagination paints to itſelf all objects in black, ſhe ſaw nothing for her in the world but rocks, and nothing but ſnares in marriage. Her ſoul, naturally delicate and timid, was immediately blaſted by fear; and age had not yet given to her ſenſes the happy power of conquering the aſcendant of opinion. Thus every thing in marriage was to her humiliating and painful. The firſt aſſiduities of her huſband, far from encouraging her, alarmed her the more. 'It is thus,' ſaid ſhe, 'that the men cover 'with flowers the chains of our ſlavery. Flat-'tery crowns the victim; pride ſoon prepares 'to ſacrifice it. He conſults my deſires now, 'in order to oppoſe them eternally hereafter. 'He would penetrate into my heart, in order 'to unfold all its receſſes; and if he diſcovers 'any foible in me, it is by that very foible that 'he will take care to humble me with more 'advantage. Let us guard ourſelves well a-'gainſt the ſnares which they ſpread for us!'

It is eaſy to foreſee the bitterneſs and coldneſs which this unhappy prejudice created on the ſide of Eliſa, in their moſt intimate commerce. Volange perceived the repugnance which ſhe had for him. He would have endeavoured to have conquered it, had he gueſſed the cauſe; but the perſuaſion that he was hated diſcouraged him; and in loſing the hope of pleaſing, it was natural enough for him to loſe the endeavour.

His ſituation was the more painful, as it was quite oppoſite to his character. Volange was gaiety, galantry, complaiſance itſelf. He had conſidered his marriage as a jolly feſtival, rather than a ſerious affair. He had taken a wife young

and

and handſome, as we chooſe a divinity, in order to raiſe altars to her. 'The world will adore 'her,' ſaid he, 'I ſhall lead her thither in 'triumph. I ſhall have a thouſand rivals; ſo 'much the better! I ſhall eclipſe them all by 'my aſſiduities, my vows, and my homages; 'and the inquietude ever attached to a jealouſy, 'delicate and timid, ſhall preſerve the lover of 'Eliſa from the negligences of the huſband.'

The impatient and diſdainful coldneſs of his wife deſtroyed this illuſion. The more he was in love with her, the more he was hurt by the diſtance which ſhe obſerved towards him; and that love, ſo tender and ſo pure, which would have formed his happineſs, was likely to be his torment. But an innocent artifice, of which chance gave him the firſt idea, re-eſtabliſhed him in all his rights.

The ſenſibility of the ſoul muſt exert itſelf; and if it has not a real object, it creates a fantaſtick one. Eliſa's repugnance was founded in a ſettled notion, that there was nothing in nature worthy to attach her. But ſhe had found in fiction ſomething to engage, to move, to melt her. The fable of the Sylphs was in vogue. Some of thoſe romances, in which is repreſented the delicious commerce of thoſe ſpirits with mortals, had fallen into her hands; and theſe brilliant chimeras had in her eyes all the charms of truth.

In ſhort, Eliſa believed in Sylphs, and burnt with the deſire of having one. We muſt be able at leaſt to form to ourſelves ſome notion of what we deſire; and it is not eaſy to form a notion of a ſpirit. Eliſa had been obliged to attribute all the features of a man to the ſylph which ſhe deſired. But for the manſion of a ce-

leſtial ſoul, ſhe had compoſed a body at pleaſure; a ſhape, elegant and noble; a figure, animated, intereſting, ingenious; a complexion, of a bloom and freſhneſs worthy of the ſylph that preſides over the morning ſtar; eyes fine, blue, and languiſhing; and I know not what of aerial in all the graces of his perſon. To all this ſhe had ſuper-added a veſture, the lighteſt imaginable, formed of ribands, colours the moſt tender, a tiſſue of ſilk, almoſt tranſparent, in which the Zephyrs ſported; two wings like thoſe of Cupid, of whom this beautiful ſylph was the image: ſuch was the chimera of Eliſa; and her heart, ſeduced by her imagination, ſighed after her own fiction.

It is natural for our moſt familiar and moſt vely ideas to recur in ſleep: and the dreams of Eliſa ſoon perſuaded her that her chimera had ſome reality.

Volange, very ſure that he was not beloved by his wife, had in vain obſerved her with the eyes of jealouſy; he ſaw her with her own ſex gay and gentle, eaſy and affable, and ſometimes even with an air of friendſhip; but no man had yet met with ſuch a reception from her as could alarm him. With that ſex her countenance was ſevere, her air diſdainful, her whole behaviour cold; ſhe ſpoke little, ſcarce vouchſafed attention to what was ſaid, and when ſhe did not ſeem tired, ſhe appeared quite out of patience. To be at her age neither tender nor a coquette! inconceivable! however, at laſt ſhe betrayed herſelf.

The opera of Zelindor, at its firſt appearance, had the moſt brilliant ſucceſs. Eliſa was preſent at the repreſentation in her own little box, with one of her women, for whom ſhe had a great partiality.

partiality. Juſtina was her confidante, and nothing attaches a timid ſoul ſo much as having once ſurmounted the difficulty of unboſoming itſelf. Eliſa would fain have had this confidante of her weakneſs perpetually with her; and her little box at the theatre was ſo dear to her, only on account of the liberty it afforded them, of being there together, and alone.

Volange, who from the oppoſite ſide of the theatre obſerved all the movements of Eliſa, ſaw her ſeveral times ſtart at the ſight of Zelindor, and talk to Juſtina with an air of paſſion.

A ſtrange uneaſineſs poſſeſſed him; but in the evening, having found Juſtina a moment alone, 'Your miſtreſs,' ſaid he, 'ſeemed highly entertained at the play?'—'Ah! Sir, ſhe is diſtractedly fond of it: Zelindor is her paſſion. It ſeems to have been made on purpoſe for her. She is not recovered of the ſurpriſe into which ſhe has been thrown by ſeeing her own dreams repreſented.'—'What! does your miſtreſs dream of ſuch things?'—'Alas! yes, Sir, and you are much to blame to reduce her to the pleaſure of dreaming. Indeed, you are very happy, that young and handſome as ſhe is, ſhe confines herſelf to the loving of ſylphs.'—'Sylphs!'——'Yes, Sir, ſylphs. But I am betraying her ſecret.'—'You jeſt, Juſtina?'——'A fine jeſt, indeed! Indeed, Sir, it is a ſhame to live with her as you do. Ah! when I ſee ſo young a lady, when ſhe wakes, her complexion blooming, eyes languiſhing, with a mouth freſher than a roſe, telling me, with a ſigh, that ſhe has juſt been happy in a dream; how I pity her! and how I hate you!'——'What d'ye mean? Your miſtreſs had in her huſband an uncommon lo-

'ver; but ſhe has returned the higheſt tender-
'neſs of love only with a coldneſs almoſt a-
'mounting to averſion.'——'You fancy ſo,
'you have miſtaken timidity for coldneſs; and
'that's always the way with the men. They
'have no pity on a young woman. Why ſhould
'you grow cool? Why not make uſe of your
'power over her?'—'That is what has reſtrain-
'ed me. I was unwilling to owe any thing to
'conſtraint, and I ſhould have been much
'warmer in my inſtances, had ſhe been more
'free in her refuſals.'——'Alas! poor
'gentleman, how good you are with this deli-
'cacy of yours! You ſhall ſee how vaſtly they
'are obliged to you for it!'—'Harkye, Juſ-
'tina, a thought has juſt ſtruck me, which, if
'you will but aſſiſt me, may reconcile us.'—
'If I'll aſſiſt you!'——'Eliſa is in love with
'ſylphs; I may perſonate a ſylph in love with
'her.'——'And how will you make yourſelf
'inviſible?'——'By viſiting her only by
'night.'——'Well, that's a good ſcheme e-
'nough.'—'It is not very new: more than
'one lover has availed himſelf of it; but Eliſa
'does not expect it, and I am perſuaded will
'be deceived. The chief difficulty is the open-
'ing the firſt ſtage of the plot; but I depend
'on your addreſs to furniſh me with an occa-
'ſion.'

An opportunity was not long in preſenting itſelf. 'Ah! Juſtina,' ſaid Eliſa, the next day on waking, 'what happineſs have I juſt enjoyed! 'I dreamed that I was under an arbour of roſes, 'where the moſt beautiful of the celeſtial ſpi-'rits ſighed at my knees.'—'How! Madam, 'ſpirits ſigh! and how was this beautiful ſpirit 'made?'——'It would be in vain for me to en-

'deavour

'deavour to deſcribe what has not its image a-
'mong mankind. When the idea is effaced
'by my waking, I can ſcarce re-trace it to my-
'ſelf.'—'But I may know at leaſt what paſſ-
'ed at your conference?'—'I don't know
'what; but I was tranſported, I heard a ra-
'viſhing voice, drew in the ſweeteſt perfumes,
'and at my waking all vaniſhed.'

Volange was informed of his wife's dream, and in her regrets he thought he ſaw the means of beginning to act the ſylph towards her. At that time eſſence of roſes was ſcarce known in Paris; Volange put into Juſtina's hands a ſmall phial of that precious elixir. 'To-morrow,' ſaid he, 'before your miſtreſs wakes, take care 'to perfume her bed with it.'

'O heaven!' ſaid Eliſa on waking, 'is it 'ſtill a dream? Come here, Juſtina, ſmell, and 'tell me what you ſmell!'—'I, Madam? I 'ſmell nothing.'—'Nothing! do you not 'ſmell roſes?'—'You grow diſtracted, my 'dear miſtreſs, pardon me for ſaying ſo. Your 'dreams might be paſſed over; but quite a-'wake! Indeed I do not conceive you.'—— 'You are right, nothing is more inconceivable. '—Leave me! draw the curtains.—Ah! the 'ſmell is ſtill more prevailing.'—'You alarm me.' '—'Hark ye! I told you yeſterday, if I re-'member right, that I was ſorry that the dream 'of the arbour was diſſipated, and that I was 'delighted with the fragrance I had breathed 'there. He has heard me, my dear Juſtina." 'Who, madam?'—'Who! don't you know? 'You put me out of patience. Leave me! But 'he ſhould know, as he is preſent, that it is 'not the flowers that I regret. Ah! how much 'ſweeter was his voice! How much more did

'it touch my heart! And his features, his di-
'vine features! Unavailing wiſhes! Alas! I
'ſhall never ſee him.' 'Why really, Madam,
'there is no great probability.'——'You
'throw me into deſpair: is it love to envy me,
'even to want to deſtroy the moſt pleaſing illu-
'ſion? for that it is one, I muſt believe; I am
'not a child.—And yet this fragrance of the ro-
'ſes!—Yes, I perceive it, nothing is more re-
'al; and it is not now the ſeaſon for thoſe
'flowers.'—'What would you have me ſay
'to you, Madam? All the deſire I have to
'pleaſe you cannot make me believe a dream to
'be a reality.'—'Very well, Mademoiſelle,
'don't believe it. Prepare my toilette, that I
'may dreſs. I am in a confuſion, in an emo-
'tion at which I bluſh, and which I know not
'how to appeaſe.'

'Victory, Sir,' ſaid Juſtina, on ſeeing Vo-
lange: 'the ſylph is announced and deſired;
'we wiſh for him; let him appear; and, take
'my word for it, he will be very well re-
'ceived.'

Eliſa was plunged all the day in a revery, which had the air of an enchantment; and in the evening her huſband perceived that ſhe wait-ed with impatience the moment of going to deli-ver herſelf up to ſleep. There was a commu-nication between the apartments, according to cuſtom, and Volange had agreed with her con-fidante on the method of getting without noiſe to his wife's pillow. But it was neceſſary, that either by a ſigh, or by ſome words which were to eſcape, ſhe ſhould herſelf invite him to ſpeak.

I forgot to mention, that Eliſa would not have any light by her in the night; not without reaſon.

reaſon. The pictures of the imagination are never ſo lively as in profound darkneſs. Thus Volange, without being perceived, eſpied the favourable moment. He heared Eliſa ſigh and ſeek repoſe with inquietude. 'Come then,' ſaid ſhe, 'happy ſleep, thou alone makeſt me love 'life.' 'It is for me,' ſaid Volange, in a voice ſo ſoft that Eliſa ſcarce heard him, 'it is for me 'to call upon ſleep: I am happy only through 'him: it is in his boſom that I poſſeſs you.' He had not time to finiſh. Eliſa gave a loud ſhriek, and Volange having diſappeared, Juſtina ran up at Eliſa's voice. 'What is the matter, Ma'dam?' 'Ah! I die; I have juſt heard him. 'Recal me, if poſſible to life. I am loved, I am 'happy. Make haſte, I cannot breathe.' Juſtina haſtens, unties her ribands, gives her ſome ſalts to ſmell, which revive her, and ſtill ſupporting her part of being incredulous, reproaches her for delivering herſelf up to ideas which diſturb her repoſe, and affect her health. 'Treat 'me as a child, as a fool!' ſaid Eliſa. 'But it 'is no longer a dream, nothing is ſo true; I 'heared him as plain as I hear you.'——Very 'well, Madam, I will not put you out of pa'tience; but endeavour to calm your ſpirits; 'remember that, in order to pleaſe a ſylph, one 'muſt be handſome, and that we ſoon become 'otherwiſe without ſleep.'—'Going, Juſtina? 'How cruel! Don't you ſee that I tremble all 'over? Stay at leaſt till I ſleep, if it be poſſible 'to ſleep in my preſent agitation.'

At laſt her fine eyes grew heavy, and it was reſolved between Juſtina and Volange, that, ſcared by the cry which Eliſa had made, the ſylph ſhould in vain be wiſhed for the next night. Accordingly, ſhe called upon him in vain.

She was afraid he would never return more. ‘ My cries have frighted him,’ ſaid ſhe. ‘ Good ‘ Madam,’ ſaid Juſtina, ‘ is a ſpirit ſo fearful ‘ then ? And ought he not to have expected the ‘ fright which he put you into ? Be eaſy : ‘ he knows what paſſes in your heart, as well ‘ as yourſelf. And perhaps at this moment ‘ he is liſtening.’ ‘ What ſay you ? You make ‘ me ſtart.’ ‘ How ! are you not very glad that ‘ your ſylph reads your ſoul ?’—‘ Aſſuredly : ‘ nothing paſſes there with which he has not rea- ‘ ſon to be pleaſed. But there is always ſome- ‘ thing of man intermingled in the idea which ‘ we form of ſylphs, and modeſty’—‘ Modeſty, ‘ in my opinion, is out of the caſe with ſpirits. ‘ Where would be the harm, for example, in ‘ engaging him to return this evening ?’—‘ Ah ! ‘ it would be vain to diſſemble ; he knows very ‘ well how much I wiſh it.’

Eliſa’s wiſh was accompliſhed. She was laid down, the light put out, and Volange at her bed’s head. ‘ D’ye think he will return,’ ſaid ſhe to Juſtina ?—‘ Yes, if he be gallant, he ‘ muſt be here already.’ ‘ Ah, if he could but ‘ hear me !’ ‘ He hears you,’ replied Vo- lange with a ſoft voice ; ‘ but, remove this ‘ witneſs, who gives me uneaſineſs.’ ‘ Juſti- ‘ na,’ ſaid Eliſa, trembling, ‘ get away.’— ‘ What now, Madam ? You ſeem moved.’— ‘ Nothing ; leave me, I ſay.’ Juſtina obeyed, and as ſoon as they were alone, ‘ What then,’ ſaid the ſylph, ‘ does my voice fright you ! It is ‘ not uſual to fear what we love.’ ‘ Alas,’ ſaid ſhe, ‘ can I ſee without emotion my dreams thus ‘ realized, and paſſing, by an inconceivable pro- ‘ digy, from illuſion to reality ? Shall I believe ‘ that one of the celeſtial ſpirits deigns to quit

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'the heavens for me, and to be familiar with 'a mere mortal?' 'If you knew,' replyed Volange, 'how much you efface all the charms of 'the nymphs of the air, you would be but little 'flattered with your conqueſt. Nor is it to va-'nity that I would owe the reward of my paſſi-'on. That paſſion is pure and unalterable as 'the eſſence of my being; but it is delicate alſo 'to exceſs. We have only the ſenſations of the 'ſoul: you have them as well as we, Eliſa; 'but in order to reliſh their delights, you muſt 'reſerve for me that ſoul of which I am jea-'lous; amuſe yourſelf with all that the world 'has intereſting and amiable; but love nothing 'in it like myſelf.' 'Alas! it is very eaſy for 'me to obey you,' ſaid ſhe, in a voice ſtill fal-'tering. 'The world has no charms for me. 'My ſoul, even when unoccupied, could not 'give acceſs to vain pleaſures which would ſe-'duce it; how can it be acceſſible then, now 'that you poſſeſs it? But you, O ſpirit celeſtial 'and pure, how can I flatter myſelf with fixing 'you, and being able to content you?' 'Learn,' replyed Volange, 'what diſtinguiſhes us from 'all the ſpirits diſperſed through the univerſe, 'and ſtill more from the human ſpecies. A ſylph 'has no happineſs in himſelf: he is happy only 'in what he loves. Nature has forbid the power 'of loving himſelf alone; and as he partakes all 'the pleaſures which he excites, he feels alſo the 'pains which he occaſions. Fate has left me 'the choice of this half of myſelf on which my 'happineſs is to depend; but, that choice de-'cided, we have no longer but one ſoul, and it 'is only in rendering you happy, that I can 'hope to be ſo.' 'Be happy then,' ſaid ſhe to him with tranſport, 'for the mere idea of an

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'union ſo ſweet, raviſhes me, and lifts me a-
'bove myſelf. What compariſon between this
'intimate commerce and that of dangerous
'mortals, whoſe ſlaves we are here! Alas!
'you know that I have ſubmitted to the laws of
'Hymen, and that they have impoſed fetters
'on me.' 'I know it,' ſaid Volange, 'and one
'of my cares ſhall be to render them light.'
'Ah!' reſumed ſhe, 'be not jealous on that
'account. My huſband is perhaps the man in
'the world who has the leaſt tincture of the vice
'of his ſpecies; but they are all ſo conceited
'and ſo proud of their advantages, ſo indulgent
'to their own faults, and ſo rigorous to ours;
'ſo little ſcrupulous as to the means of ſeducing
'and making us ſlaves, that there would be as
'much imprudence as weakneſs in delivering
'ourſelves up to them.' 'Well,' ſaid her ſylph,
'would you believe it? All that with which
'you reproach the men, do we reproach the
'ſylphids. Soft, inſinuating, fertile in evaſi-
'ons, there is no art which they do not em-
'ploy to domineer over the ſpirits; but once
'ſure of their power, a capricious and abſolute
'will, an imperious pride, to which every thing
'muſt bow, take place of timidity, gentleneſs,
'and complaiſance; and it is not till after hav-
'ing loved them, that we perceive we ought to
'hate them. This prevailing character, which
'nature has given them, has however its excep-
'tions: it is the ſame among the men. But
'be that as it may, my dear Eliſa, both the one
'and the other world will be ſtrangers to us, if
'you love me as I do you. Adieu; my duty
'and your repoſe oblige me to quit you. Hea-
'ven has confided to me the care of your ſtar; I
'am going to direct its courſe. May it diffuſe

'over

'over you the moſt favourable influence.'—'Alas! going ſo ſoon!'—'Yes, in order to ſee you again to-morrow at the ſame hour.'—'Adieu:—but no, one word more. May I have a confidante?'—'You have one, confine yourſelf to her. Juſtina loves you, and ſhe is dear to me.'—'What name ſhall I give you in ſpeaking to her about you?'—'In heaven they call me *Valoé*, and in the ſylphid language that name ſignifies *all Soul*.'—'Ah! I merit the ſame name ſince I have heard you.' The ſylph then vaniſhed. Eliſa's heart ſwam with joy, ſhe was at the ſummit of her wiſhes, and in the midſt of the delicious ideas which poſſeſſed her, ſleep ſeiſed her ſenſes.

Juſtina was informed of every thing that had paſſed, and had no need to repeat it to Volange. She only acquainted him that he had left his wife in an enchantment. 'That is not enough,' ſaid he: 'in the ſylph's abſence, I would have every thing recal his paſſion to her. You read her ſoul, you know her likings; inſtruct me in her wiſhes: the ſylph will have the air of divining them.'—In the evening, Eliſa, to be the more at liberty, went to walk alone with Juſtina, in one of thoſe magnificent gardens which are the ornament of Paris; and though ſhe was there wholly taken up with her ſylph, an inclination, natural to young women, made her caſt her eyes on the dreſs of an unknown lady. 'Ah, what a pretty gown!' cried ſhe to herſelf; and Juſtina pretended not to hear her. But the adroite attendant, having heard the name of this lady who was ſo well dreſſed, remembered it, and told it to Volange.

The hour of rendezvous being come, Eliſa goes to bed, and as ſoon as ſhe is alone, 'Ah! 'my

'my dear Valoé,' ſaid ſhe, 'have you forgot 'me! Here am I alone, and you come not!' 'He waited for you,' ſaid Volange: 'your 'image has followed him into heaven. He has 'ſeen only you in the midſt of all the aerial court. 'But you, Eliſa, in his abſence, have you wiſh-'ed only for him?' 'No,' ſaid ſhe to him aſ-ſuredly, 'nothing but you intereſts me.'—'I 'know, however, Eliſa, that you have formed 'a wiſh that was not for me.' 'You make me 'uneaſy,' ſaid ſhe; 'I have examined myſelf 'in vain, I know not what that wiſh can be.' 'You have forgot it, but I remember it, and 'far from complaining of it, I wiſh that you 'may often have the like. I have told you the 'ſylphs are jealous, but it only renders them the 'more earneſt to pleaſe. Do not be aſtoniſhed 'to ſee me curious of the ſmalleſt particulars of 'your life: I would leave in it only the flowers, 'and remove the ſmalleſt thorn. For example, 'your huſband ceaſes not to give me uneaſineſs. 'How are you with him?' 'Why' ſaid Eliſa, a little confounded, 'I live with him as with a 'man; in that diffidence and fear which a ſex 'born the enemy of ours naturally inſpires. 'They gave me to him without conſulting me; 'I followed my duty, and not my inclination. 'He ſaid he loved me, and he would have pleaſ-'ed me, that is, have captivated me: he has 'not ſucceeded; and his vanity, which he calls 'delicacy, has diverted him from his deſign. 'Thus you ſee we are good friends; or, if you 'pleaſe, both of us free.'—'Is he at leaſt a lit-'tle complaiſant?'—'Why, yes, ſufficiently to 'ſeduce a woman who did not know ſo well as I, 'how dangerous men are.'—'You might have 'fallen into worſe hands; and this huſband is

'not

'not ſo troubleſome as his ſex generally are. He 'does well as to the reſt; and if ever you ſhould 'have cauſe to complain of him, he ſhall be 'puniſhed for it inſtantly,' 'Oh no, I conjure 'you,' ſaid ſhe, trembling, 'though he ſhould 'totally neglect me, never interfere in it. I owe 'you all my confidence; but it would be cruel 'abuſe of it, to do him any manner of hurt. He 'is unhappy enough in being a man, and it is a 'ſufficient puniſhment.'—'Your ſoul is celeſ-'tial, charming Eliſa; a mortal did not deſerve 'you. Liſten; I have not told you our man-'ner of puniſhing the men. They know only 'fire and ſword; but we have gentler methods 'of vengeance. When ever your huſband ſhall 'have diſpleaſed you, you ſhall inform me of it; 'and from that inſtant, regret, reproach ſhall 'ſeiſe his ſoul, and he ſhall have neither peace 'with me, nor with himſelf, 'till he has ex-'piated at your knees the diſpleaſure he has oc-'caſioned. I will do more, I will inſpire into 'him all that you inſpire into me. Thus the 'ſpirit of your ſylph ſhall animate your huſband, 'and ſhall be preſent to you without ceaſing.' 'That,' ſaid Eliſa tranſported, 'is the only way 'of making me love him.' Thus paſſed this laſt converſation.

The day after, Eliſa being at her toilette, Juſtina caſt her eyes on the ſopha in her cloſet, and ſets up a cry of aſtoniſhment. Eliſa turns about, and ſees there diſplayed a gown like that which ſhe had ſeen in her walk. 'Ah! ſee now 'in what manner he avenges himſelf of a wiſh 'not formed for him! Juſtina, will you believe 'me at laſt? Is not a ſylph to be adored?' Eli-ſa's eyes could not weary themſelves in admiring this new prodigy. Volange arrives in that mo-ment.

ment. 'There's a beautiful gown!' ſaid he, 'Your taſte, Madam, does great honour to 'what you love. I think,' continued he, examining the ſtuff nearer, 'this is made by the 'hands of fairies.' This familiar manner of ſpeaking came out ſo à propos, that Eliſa bluſhed as if ſhe had been betrayed, and her ſecret revealed.

In the evening ſhe failed not to extol the forward gallantry of her handſome little ſylph; and he in his turn ſaid to her a thouſand things, ſo delicate, and ſo tender, on the happineſs of embelliſhing what we love, and of enjoying the good which we do, that ſhe was perpetually repeating it: 'No, never mortal knew ſuch lan-'guage: none but a celeſtial being can think 'and ſpeak thus. 'I acquaint you, however, 'before-hand,' ſaid he, 'that your huſband will 'ſoon become my rival. I take a pleaſure in 'purifying his ſoul, in rendering it as gentle, as 'tender, as flexible to your deſires as his nature 'permits. You will be a gainer by it without 'doubt, Eliſa, and your happineſs is wholly 'mine: but ſhall not I be a loſer?' 'Ah! can 'you doubt,' ſaid ſhe, 'that I ſhall not attribute 'to you all the care he ſhall take to pleaſe me? 'Is he not like a ſtatue which you endeavour to 'animate?'—'Thus you will love me in him; 'and in thinking that it is I who animate him, 'you will take a pleaſure in rendering him hap-'py.'—'No, Valoé, that would be to deceive 'him: I hate falſehood. It is you that I love, 'not him; and to teſtify to him what I feel for 'you, would be to deceive both.' Volange, not to engage any farther in ſo delicate a diſpute, changed the ſubject, and aſked her how ſhe had amuſed herſelf all the day. 'Hey!' ſaid ſhe to

'him,

him, 'do not you know, you who read my 'thoughts? The moments in which I was dis-'engaged, I employed in tracing out a cypher, 'in which our two names are entwined. I draw 'flowers pretty well, and I never did any thing 'with ſo much taſte as thoſe which form that 'kind of chain.' 'You have alſo,' ſaid he to her, 'a rare talent which you neglect, and the 'pleaſures of which are heavenly: you have a 'touching voice, an exquiſite ear, and the harp 'under your fingers, mingling its accords with 'your ſounds, would form the delight of the 'inhabitants of the air.' Eliſa promiſed to exerciſe herſelf in it, and they parted more taken, more enchanted with each other than ever.

'I am often alone,' ſaid ſhe to her huſband; 'muſick would amuſe me. The harp is in fa-'ſhion, and I have an inclination to try it.' 'Nothing ſo eaſy,' ſaid Volange, with an air of complaiſance: and that very evening ſhe had an harp.

The ſylph returned at his hour, and appeared charmed with ſeeing her ſelf and follow his ideas with ſo much vivacity. 'Alas!' ſaid Eliſa to him, 'you are more happy, you divine my 'wiſhes, and know how to prevent them. How 'precious is the gift of reading the ſoul of the 'perſon we love! We don't allow time to wiſh. 'Such is your advantage over me.' 'Conſole 'yourſelf,' ſaid Valoé to her, 'complaiſance 'has its value: I fulfil my own wiſhes when I 'prevent yours; and you, in waiting for mine, 'have the pleaſure of telling yourſelf that it is 'my ſoul guides you. It is more flattering to 'prevent; but it is ſweeter to comply. My ad-'vantage is that of ſelf-love; yours is that of 'love.'

So

So much delicacy was to Eliſa the moſt charming of all ties. She would fain have never ceaſed to hear a voice ſo dear; but, out of tenderneſs to her, Volange took care to withdraw as ſoon as he had gently moved her, and ſleep came to calm her ſpirits,

The firſt idea which ſhe had at her waking was that of her ſylph, and the ſecond that of her harp. It was brought to her the evening before, quite plain, and without ornaments. She flies into her cabinet, and finds a harp decorated with a garland of flowers, which ſeemed freſhly gathered. Her joy was equal to her aſtoniſhment. 'No,' ſaid ſhe, 'no; never has the pencil in 'the hand of a mortal produced this illuſion.' And what doubt but this was a preſent from her ſylph? Two brilliant wings crowned this harp, the ſame, without doubt, which Valoé played on in the celeſtial choir. While ſhe was returning him thanks, the muſician arrives, whom ſhe had ſent for to give her leſſons.

Timotheus, inſtructed by Volange in the part which he was to perform, opened with an encomium on the harp, 'What fulneſs, what 'harmony in the ſounds of this fine inſtrument! 'What could be more ſoft, more majeſtick? 'The harp,' if we might take his word for it, 'would renew all the prodigies of the lyre. But 'the triumph of the harp,' added this new Orpheus, 'is when it ſupports with its ſymphonies 'the accents of a voice melodious and tender. 'Obſerve too, Madam, that nothing diſcovers 'to more advantage the graces of a fine hand 'and arm; and when a lady knows how to give 'her head an air of enthuſiaſm, ſo that her features grow animated, and her eyes kindle at

'the

'the ſounds which ſhe occaſions, ſhe becomes 'half as beautiful again.'

Eliſa cut ſhort this encomium, by aſking her maſter whether he was a deſcendant of Timotheus, Alexander's muſician. 'Yes, Madam,' ſaid he, 'of the ſame family.' She took her firſt leſſon. The muſick-maſter appeared enchanted with the ſeraphick tones of the harp. 'Divine!' cried he.—'I warrant it,' ſaid Eliſa to herſelf.—'Come, Madam, try 'theſe harmonious ſtrings.' Eliſa applied to them a timid hand, and every note that ſhe drew from the inſtrument thrilled to her very heart. 'Wonderful, Madam,' cried Timotheus, 'wonderful! I hope ſoon to hear you accompany 'your touching voice, and ſet off my muſick, 'and my verſes.' 'You make verſes then too?' demanded ſhe ſmiling. 'Ah! Madam,' ſaid Timotheus, 'that is the ſtrangeſt thing in the 'world, and I can ſcarce conceive it myſelf. I 'had heard that we had a genius, and I took 'it for a fable; but upon my word nothing is 'more real. I had one, I who now ſpeak to 'you, and I had him without knowing it. It was 'but yeſterday evening that I had freſh confirmation of it.'——And how did you make this 'diſcovery?'—'How? laſt night, in my ſleep, 'my genius appeared to me in a dream, and dictated the following verſes:

'The empty honour I renounce
'To guide thy car, Aurora!
'No more, no more will I announce
'Thy ſweet return, oh Flora!
'Me now employs a gentler, happier care;
'To guard my waking, guard my ſleeping fair.

'In

'In vain Aurora weeps, in vain
'Would Flora bind me in her roſy chain:
'With dear Eliſa will I ſtay,
'Eliſa fairer——fairer far than they.'

'What!' ſaid Eliſa, with much emotion, 'what! Timotheus, did you make theſe verſes?'—'I, Madam! I never made any in my life. It was my genius that dictated them to me. He has done more: he has ſet them to muſick, as you ſhall hear.—Well, Madam,' ſaid he, after having ſung them, 'how do you like them? Is it not happy to have a genius like mine?'—But, Sir, don't you know at leaſt who this Eliſa is, whom you celebrate?'—— 'Why, Madam, I believe it is a name like Phyllis, Chloris, or Iris. My genius pitched upon that, becauſe it is agreeable to the ear.'—— 'So, you do not pique yourſelf upon underſtanding the meaning of the verſes which you ſing?'—'No, Madam, but that is no matter: they are melodious, and full of ſenſibility, and that is enough for a ſong.' 'Let me beg you,' reſumed ſhe, 'to repeat them to nobody elſe, and if your genius ſhould inſpire any more, pray reſerve them for me.'

She expected her ſylph with impatience, in order to thank him for the inſpiration. He denied them; but ſo weakly, that ſhe was but the more convinced. He confeſſed, however, that it was not without reaſon that thoſe men were regarded as inſpired, who without reflexion produced fine thoughts. 'Theſe are, ſaid he, 'the favourites of the ſylphs, and each of them has his own particular one, whom he calls his genius. It is no wonder, therefore, that Timotheus ſhould have one; and if he inſpires him

'with

'with verſes which pleaſe you, he may boaſt of 'being next to me the happieſt of the inhabi- 'tants of the air.' The genius of Timotheus became every day more fertile, and every day Eliſa was more ſenſible of the praiſes he beſtowed on her. However, Volange prepared her a new ſurpriſe, and the following was the object of it.

The reader remembers that ſhe amuſed herſelf in tracing out a cypher, in which the name of Valoé was interwoven with her own. One day being invited to a feaſt, ſhe was preparing to put on her diamonds: ſhe opens her caſket, and what does ſhe ſee? her bracelets, her necklace, her aigrette, her ear-rings, mounted after the pattern of that very cypher which ſhe had drawn. Her firſt ſenſation was that of embarraſſment and ſurpriſe. 'What will Volange 'think? What will he ſuſpect?' While ſhe was yet at her toilette, enters Volange, and caſting his eyes on her jewels, Ah!' ſaid he, 'Nothing can be more gallant. My name and 'yours in the ſame cypher! I ſhould be very 'much flattered, Madam, to ſuppoſe that this 'were a ſtroke of ſentiment.' She bluſhed inſtead of feigning; but in the evening Valoé was chid. 'You have expoſed me,' ſaid ſhe, 'to 'a danger at which I tremble even yet: I 'have ſeen the inſtant wherein there was a ne- 'ceſſity for me either to deceive my huſband, or 'to give him the moſt humiliating opinion of 'me; and although the advantage which the 'men draw from our ſincerity authoriſes us to 'uſe diſſimulation, I perceive that in making 'uſe of that right, I ſhould be ill at eaſe with 'myſelf.' Valoé failed not to commend her delicacy. 'A little lie,' ſaid he, 'is always a

'little

'little evil, and I ſhould be ſorry to have been 'the occaſion. But the reſemblance of the 'name of Volange to mine had not eſcaped me, 'and I knew that your huſband would go no 'farther than appearances. I have begun by 'rendering him diſcreet: that is the firſt good 'quality in a huſband.'

The whole winter had paſſed away in gallantries on the part of the ſylph, and on the ſide of Eliſa in emotions of ſurpriſe and joy, which bordered on enchantment.

The firſt, and the moſt beautiful of the ſeaſons, the time in which we enjoy nature, arrives. Volange had a country-houſe. 'We 'will ſet out when ever you pleaſe,' ſaid he to his wife; and though he had ſaid this in the handſomeſt manner, and in the ſweeteſt tone of voice, ſhe, perceived very well, ſhe ſaid, that this invitation carried in it the imperious will of a huſband. She confided her pain to Valoé. 'I 'don't ſee,' ſaid he to her, 'any thing painful 'in what he has propoſed to you. Nothing at-'taches you to the town, and the country is at 'preſent a delicious abode, eſpecially to a ſoul 'ſenſible and benevolent as yours. We there 'ſee in nature the firſt efforts of her bounteous 'inclination; and the care of making mortals 'happy, renews itſelf there under a thouſand 'forms. The foreſts crowned with a thick ver-'dure, the orchards in bloom, the corn ſpring-'ing up, the meadows enamelled, the flocks 'newly recruited and bounding with joy at the 'firſt ſight of the light; all concur to preſent 'us in the country the image of bounty. In 'winter nature ſhews herſelf under an aſpect 'threatening and horrible; in autumn ſhe is 'rich and fruitful, but ſhe groans to unburthen

'herſelf,

'herſelf, and her liberality afflicts her; even in 'ſummer ſhe ſells her gifts, and the ſad image 'of exceſſive labour joins itſelf to that of abun-'dance. It is in ſpring, that nature is gaily pro-'digal of her riches, and fond of the good ſhe is 'doing.' 'Alas!' ſaid Eliſa, 'Nature is beau-'tiful, I grant; but will ſhe be ſo to me, in 'that very place where I connected my fortunes 'to thoſe of a mortal, where I took an oath to 'be devoted to him, where every thing will re-'cal the humiliating remembrance to my mind?' '—No,' replied the ſylph, 'nothing, my dear 'Eliſa, nothing in nature is humiliating, but 'what is contrary to her ordinances. The per-'fection of a plant is to flouriſh and bud: the 'perfection of a woman is to become a wife and 'a mother. If you had oppoſed the wiſdom of 'this deſign, you would not have received my 'vows.' What!' ſaid Eliſa, 'can a pure eſ-'ſence, a celeſtial ſpirit, love in me that which 'degrades me beneath him!'—'Be what you 'are, my dear creature: I love you as a ſylph; 'and it is not of your ſenſes that I am jealous. 'Let your ſoul be fair and pure, let it be devot-'ed to me, that is ſufficient. As to what are 'called your charms, they are ſubmitted to the 'laws of mortals: one of them poſſeſſes them; 'let him diſpoſe of them; far from complain-'ing, I ſhall rejoice at it, for one of your duties 'is to render him happy.'—'Ah! give me time, 'at leaſt, to accuſtom myſelf to this way of 'thinking. In the country we ſee one another 'oftener: I ſhall familiarize myſelf, perhaps, 'to that duty. But prithee do not abandon me!' '—I ſhall be there with you perpetually. I love 'peace and ſilence.'

There

'of power over his ſoul! What do you propoſe 'doing to-morrow, my dear Eliſa?'—'I ſhall 'bathe in the morning.'—'I will come to ſee 'you bathe, if poſſible, and I will paſs a mo-'ment with you.'

On Eliſa's waking in the morning, word was brought her that the bath was ready. She went there with the faithful Juſtina; but as the ſylph was to come to ſee her, and modeſty is always timid, ſhe would have the curtains drawn, and ſcarce admit any light into the room.

Eliſa enters the bath, and in a pannel oppoſite to her, her eyes perceive ſome confuſed features. This was the portrait of Eliſa, painted beneath glaſs, and which Volange had cauſed to be put there inſtead of a looking-glaſs: a ſtriking deluſion, but eaſy to be produced, by means of a groove made in the partition, through which ſilently ſlided, by turns, the looking-glaſs and the picture, one after another.

In this picture, Eliſa was exalted on a cloud, and ſurrounded with aerial ſpirits, who preſented her with garlands of flowers. At firſt ſhe took what ſhe ſaw for the reflection of the oppoſite objects; but in proportion as, with an eye more attentive, ſhe diſcovers what ſtrikes her, ſurpriſe ſucceeds to miſtake. 'Juſtina,' ſaid ſhe, 'let in ſome light. Either I dream, or I ſee.—'O heaven!' cried ſhe, as ſoon as a ſufficient degree of light was thrown on the picture, 'my 'image in that glaſs!'—'Why, Madam, I ſee 'mine there too. Where is the wonder, that 'one ſees one's ſelf in a looking-glaſs?'——'Come here yourſelf then, come here, I ſay. 'Is that the effect of a looking-glaſs?'——'Cer-'tainly.'——Certainly! this cloud, theſe flow-'ers, theſe genii, and I in the midſt of that ce-

leſtial

'leſtial circle, borne in triumph through the 'air!'——'You are not well awake yet, Ma-'dam, and no doubt but you are finiſhing your 'dream in the bath.'——'No, Juſtina, I don't 'dream; but I ſee that picture is not made for 'your eyes. O, my dear Valoé, it is you that 'have painted it. How ingenious is your ten-'derneſs!'

Eliſa's eyes were for a whole hour fixed on the picture. She expected her ſylph; but he came not. 'He has but juſt paſſed by,' ſaid ſhe, 'and in that homage has declared himſelf. 'But what will my huſband ſay? How ſhall I 'explain this prodigy to him?' 'Ah! Madam,' ſaid Juſtina, 'if this picture be not viſible to 'my eyes, why ſhould it be ſo to his?'—— 'Right; but I am ſo confounded!'. . .In ſaying theſe words, ſhe lifts up her eyes, and inſtead of the picture which ſhe had ſeen, ſhe finds there only the looking-glaſs. 'Ah! I am eaſy,' ſaid ſhe: 'the picture is vaniſhed. My amiable 'ſylph will not give me the ſlighteſt uneaſineſs. 'And how ſhould I not love a ſpirit wholly oc-'cupied with my pleaſures and repoſe?'

Impatient of knowing the ſucceſs of her requeſt, ſhe pretended in the evening to be fatigued with walking, and to have need of ſleep. The ſylph did not make her wait. 'I know 'not,' ſaid he, 'my dear Eliſa, whether you 'will be content with what I have obtained. I 'am permitted to appear to you.'——'Ah! 'that is all that I deſire.'—'But what I foreſaw 'is come to paſs. The king of the air, who 'reads our thoughts, has preſcribed to me the 'form which I am to take, and that form is.... 'gueſs.'——'I cannot tell, put me quickly out 'of my pain.'——'Your huſband's.'——'My

'husband's!'——'I have done every thing in 'the world to obtain a form which should please 'you more; but it was impossible. He threat- 'ened to withdraw his boon from me, if I was 'not content; and, reduced to this alternative, 'I liked that better than nothing.'——'Very 'well, and when shall I see you?——'To- 'morrow, in your little wilderness, at sunset.' '——I shall be there, for I depend on you.'— 'You may without doubt.'——'And yet you 'promised to come to see me this morning. I 'received the most gallant homage from you. 'But it was you that I expected.'——'I was 'not far off; but intimidated by the presence 'of Justina..'—'Ah! I was wrong, I ought 'to have sent her away. But you shall have 'no more reason to blame me on that account, 'and I shall be alone in the arbour.'

This assignation did not fail to give Volange some little uneasiness. 'She delivers herself up 'to me,' said he. 'Shall I avail myself, to try 'her, of the illusion into which I have thrown 'her? It would be very pleasing to me to at- 'tempt her, if I was sure that she would resist! 'But if I were so sure of that, I should have no 'need of trial. Fatal curiosity! Let me consider: 'let me see which is the less dangerous way. 'Ought I to clear it up to myself, or remain 'in doubt? In the first case, doubt leaves me in a 'cloud; and can I answer for my thoughts? 'Perhaps when it shall be too late to justify her, 'I shall do her the injury to believe that her 'imagination being seduced would have tri- 'umphed over her virtue. I shall then reproach 'myself in vain, and the evil will be without re- 'medy: If, on the contrary, I try her, and she 'resist, I am too happy. But if she yield!...

'Well,

'Well, if ſhe yield, I ſhall think that the virtue of women is not able to hold out againſt ſpirits. Yes, but that ſpirit is clothed with a body, and though that body be mine, no thanks to Eliſa. What a labyrinth! On entering into it I foreſaw every thing, except the means of getting out. Let me deliberate no longer; let me repair to the arbour; and the occaſion ſhall determine me.'

Volange, without pretending to obſerve Eliſa, did not ſuffer one of her movements to eſcape him. He ſaw her dreſs herſelf with a modeſty full of grace, and the decency ſhe mingled in her attire re-encouraged him a little. He remarked alſo, that ſhe wore all the day an air of ſweetneſs, and a ſerenity which announced an innocent joy.

However, the impatient eyes of Eliſa meaſured the courſe of the ſun. At laſt the happy moment approaches, and Volange, whom ſhe had ſeen ſet out in a hunting-dreſs, repairs firſt to the arbour in the moſt elegant habit.

Eliſa arrives, perceives him at a diſtance, and the emotion it excited in her, almoſt makes her faint away. He flies to meet her, reaches out his hand to her, and ſeeing her trembling, ſeats her on her little throne of turf.

Eliſa recovering her ſpirits, finds her ſylph at her knees. 'What!' ſaid he to her, 'was it 'fear that the ſight of me was to inſpire into 'you? Did I not ſpare you the ſurpriſe of it? 'Did not you deſire to ſee me? Are you ſorry 'for it, and would you have me diſappear?'— 'Alas, no! puniſh not me for an involuntary 'weakneſs. Joy and tenderneſs have a greater 'ſhare than terror in the diſorder you now occaſion.' 'I tremble,' ſaid Volange to himſelf:

ſelf: ‘ ſhe is ſoftened; a bad beginning! Ah! ‘ my dear Eliſa, why was I not free to chooſe ‘ among mortals him whoſe figure might have ‘ pleaſed you moſt; and how ill at eaſe is a lo- ‘ ver under the form of a huſband!’ ‘ That is ‘ the ſame thing,’ ſaid ſhe ſmiling. ‘ It would ‘ have been more agreeable to me, I confeſs, to ‘ have ſeen you under the image of one of theſe ‘ flowers which I love, or of one of thoſe birds, ‘ which like you, are inhabitants of the air; ‘ but as a man, I had as lief ſee you under the ‘ features of my huſband, as thoſe of any other ‘ perſon. You ſeem to me even to ſet it off. It ‘ is, indeed, Volange that I ſee in you; but ‘ your ſoul gives to his eyes ſomething, I know ‘ not what, that is celeſtial. Your voice, in ‘ paſſing through his mouth, communicates to ‘ it a charm perfectly divine; and in his action I ‘ perceive graces which never body animated by ‘ a mere mortal poſſeſſed.——‘ Well then, if ‘ you love me ſuch as you now ſee me, I can al- ‘ ways be the ſame.’——‘ You enchant me.’ ——‘ Shall you be happy then?’ added he, kiſſing her hand. Eliſa bluſhed, and withdrew the hand which he had ſeiſed. ‘ You forget,’ ſaid ſhe, ‘ that it is a ſylph, and not a man that ‘ I love in you. Valoé is to me only a ſpirit, as ‘ Eliſa is to you only a ſoul; and if you have ‘ not been able to take the figure of a mortal ‘ without changing the purity of your eſſence ‘ and of your love, quit that degrading form, ‘ and make me not bluſh any longer at the im- ‘ prudence of my wiſhes.’ ‘ Very well!’ ſaid Volange, in a low voice: ‘ but I now touch on ‘ the critical moment.

‘ Eliſa, it is no longer time to feign. I have ‘ done what you deſired; but learn what it coſts ‘ me.’

'me.' 'I conſent to it, (ſaid the king of the 'genii to me) obey the laws of a woman, be-'come man; but flatter not thyſelf with having 'his ſenſations only in appearance. Thou art 'now going to love like other mortals, and to 'feel the pleaſures and pains of it. If thou art 'unhappy, come not groaning and troubling the 'air with thy complaints. I baniſh thee from 'the heavens till the moment wherein Eliſa ſhall 'have crowned thy wiſhes.' 'I hoped to prevail 'on you,' added the ſylph, 'or rather I meant 'to comply with you; I ſubmitted to that ſevere 'decree. Judge then, whether I love you, and 'whether you ought to puniſh me for it.'

This diſcourſe drove Eliſa to deſpair. 'O thou 'moſt imprudent, and moſt cruel of aerial ſpirits,' cried ſhe! 'What have you done? And to 'what extremity do you reduce me?' Volange quaked at ſeeing his wife's eyes filled with tears. 'Why did you not conſult me?' added ſhe. 'Was 'it for my ſhame, or for your puniſhment, that 'I deſired to ſee you? And whatever that 'deſire was, could you think that it could over-'come what I owe to you and what I owe to 'myſelf? I love you Valoé, I repeat it to you; 'and if there needed nothing but my life to re-'pair the evils which I do you, you ſhould no 'longer have cauſe to complain. But my virtue 'is dearer to me than my life and my love.' Volange leaped with joy. 'I cannot blame you,' ſaid he, 'for an exceſs of delicacy; but ſee how 'much I reſemble Volange: it is almoſt he, or 'rather he himſelf, who falls at your feet, who 'adores you, and demands of you the reward of 'the moſt faithful and tendereſt paſſion.—— 'No, it is in vain that you reſemble him, you 'are not he, and it is to him alone that the re-

'ward which you demand is due. Ariſe; de-
'part from me; and ſee me not again all your
'life. Leave me, I ſay; are you mad? What
'is that inſulting joy which I ſee ſparkling in
'your eyes? Would you have the audaciouſneſs
'to hope yet?'——'Yes, I hope, my dear
'Eliſa, that thou wilt live only for me.'—'Ah!
'this is the height of outrage.'——'Hear me.'
—'No, I will hear nothing.'—'A ſingle word
'will diſarm thee.'—'That word then muſt be
'an eternal farewel.'——'No, death only ſhall
'ſeparate us: behold thy huſband in thy ſylph.
'Yes, it is Volange, whom you hated, that is
'this Valoé whom you love.'—'O heaven!...
'But no, you impoſe upon me by the reſem-
'blance.'——'No, I tell thee, and Juſtina is
'witneſs that the whole affair is but a jeſt.'——
'Juſtina! She is my confidante.' 'She has
'helped me to miſlead you; ſhe ſhall aſſiſt me
'to undeceive you.'—'You! my huſband!
'can it be poſſible? I tremble yet, finiſh, tell
'me how theſe prodigies were performed.'——
'It is love has wrought them all, and you ſhall
'know by what means.'—'Ah' if it be true!'
...'If it be true, my Eliſa, can you believe
'that there is in the world a man worthy to be
'loved?'——'Yes, I will believe that there
'is one, and that it is I who poſſeſs him.'

Juſtina being interrogated, confeſſed all, and was obliged to take her oath that Valoé was none other than Volange. 'It is now,' ſaid Eliſa, throwing herſelf into the arms of her huſband, 'it is now that I am enchanted, 'and I 'hope that nothing but death alone will break 'the charm.'

LAURETTA.

LAURETTA.

IT was the feſtival of the village of Coulange. The Marquis of Clancé, whoſe ſeat was at no great diſtance, was come with his company to ſee this rural ſpectacle, and to mingle in the dances of the villagers, as it happens pretty often to thoſe whom diſguſt chaſes from the lap of luxury, and who are carried in deſpite of themſelves towards pleaſures that are pure and ſimple.

Among the young country-girls who gave new life to the joy that reigned there, and who were dancing under the elm, who would not have diſtinguiſhed Lauretta, by the elegance of her figure, the regularity of her features, and that natural grace which is more touching than beauty? She eclipſed all others that aſſiſted at the feſtival. Ladies of quality, who piqued themſelves on being handſome, could not help owning that they had never ſeen any thing ſo raviſhing. They called her up to them, and examined her, as a painter does a model. 'Lift up your eyes, child,' ſaid the ladies. 'What vivacity, what ſweet-'neſs, what voluptuouſneſs in her looks! If ſhe 'did but know what they expreſs! What ha-'vock a ſkilful coquette would make with thoſe 'eyes! And that mouth! Can any thing be 'more freſh? What a vermillion on her lips! 'How pure an enamel on her teeth! Her face 'is a little brown, and ſun-burnt; but it is the 'complexion of health. See how that ivory 'neck is rounded on thoſe fine ſhoulders! How 'well ſhe look'd in a genteel dreſs! And thoſe 'little budding charms which Love himſelf 'ſeems to have planted —! Well! that is ex-

'tremely pleaſant!—On whom is Nature going 'to laviſh her gifts? Where is beauty going to 'hide herſelf? Lauretta, how old are you?'—'I was fifteen laſt month.'——'You are to be 'married ſoon without doubt?'——'My father 'ſays that there is no hurry.'——'And you, 'Lauretta, have you no ſweetheart lurking in 'your heart?'——'I don't know what a ſweet-'heart is.—'What, is there no young man that 'you wiſh to have for a huſband?'——'I ne-'ver trouble my head about that: it is my fa-'ther's buſineſs.'——What does your father 'do?'—'He cultivates his farm.'——'Is he 'rich?'—'No; but he ſays he is happy if I 'am diſcreet.'——'And how do you employ 'yourſelf?'—'I help my father; I work with 'him.'——'With him! What! do you 'cultivate the ground?'—'Yes, but the toils 'of the vineyard are only an amuſement to me. 'To weed, plant vine-props, bind the vine-'branch to them, to thin the leaves that the 'grapes may ripen, and to gather it when it is 'ripe, all that is not very laborious.'——'Poor 'child! I am not ſurpriſed that thoſe fine hands 'are tanned! What pity that ſhe ſhould be 'born in a low and obſcure ſtate!'

Lauretta, who in her village had never excited any thing but envy, was a little ſurpriſed at her inſpiring pity. As her father had carefully concealed from her whatever might have given her uneaſineſs, it had never come into her head that ſhe was an object of pity. But in caſting her eyes on the dreſs of thoſe ladies, ſhe ſaw very well that they were in the right. What difference between their clothes and her's! What freſhneſs and what beauty in the light ſilken ſtuff which flowed in long folds about them! What

delicate

delicate ſhoes! With what grace and elegance their hair was dreſt! What new luſtre that fine linen, and thoſe ribbands, thoſe laces gave to their half-veiled charms! Indeed thoſe ladies had not the lively air of high health; but could Lauretta imagine that the luxury which dazzled her was the cauſe of that languor, which rouge itſelf was not able to diſguiſe? While ſhe was ruminating on all this, the Count de Luzy approaches her, and invites her to dance with him. He was young, well dreſſed, well made, and too ſeducing for Lauretta.

Though ſhe had not the moſt delicate taſte in dancing, ſhe could not but remark in the nobleneſs, the juſtneſs, and the lightneſs of the Count's movements, a grace which was not to be found in the caperings of the young villagers. She had ſometimes felt her hand preſſed, but never by a hand ſo ſoft. The Count in dancing followed her with his eyes. Lauretta found that his looks gave life and ſoul to the dance, and whether it was that ſhe tried from emulation to give the ſame grace to hers, or whether the firſt ſpark of love communicated itſelf from her heart to her eyes, they replied to thoſe of the Count by the moſt natural expreſſion of joy and ſentiment.

The dance ended, Lauretta went and ſeated herſelf at the foot of the elm, and the Count at her knees. 'Let us not part any more,' ſaid he to her, 'my pretty dear: I will dance with no 'body but you.' 'That is doing me a great 'deal of honour,' ſaid ſhe, 'but it would 'make my companions uneaſy; and in this 'village they are apt to be jealous.,—'And well 'they may, to ſee you ſo handſome; and in 'town they would be the ſame: it is a misfor-

'tune

'tune which will follow you every where. Ah! Lauretta! if in Paris, in the midſt of thoſe women ſo vain of beauty which is only artificial, they were to ſee you appear, all at once, with thoſe natural charms of which you are ſo unconſcious!'—'I, Sir, at Paris! alas, what ſhould I do there?'—'Be the delight of all eyes, and make the conqueſt of all hearts. Hark ye, Lauretta, we have not opportunity to talk together here. But, in two words; it depends only on yourſelf to have, inſtead of an obſcure cottage, and a vineyard to cultivate, it depends only on yourſelf to have, at Paris, a little palace ſhining with gold and ſilk, a table according to your wiſh, the gayeſt furniture, the moſt elegant equipage, gowns for all ſeaſons, and of all colours; in ſhort, every thing which forms the agreeableneſs of an eaſy, quiet, and delicious life, without any other care than that of enjoying them, and of loving me as I do you. Think of it at your leiſure. To-morrow there is to be a ball at the caſtle; all the youth of the village are invited. You will be there, my ſweet Lauretta, and tell me if my paſſion touches you, and whether you accept my offers. To day I aſk nothing but ſecrecy, the moſt inviolable. Obſerve it well: if it eſcape you, all the happineſs which now awaits you will vaniſh like a dream.

Lauretta thought ſhe had been in a dream. The brilliant lot that had been painted to her was ſo far from the humble ſtate to which ſhe was reduced, that a paſſage ſo eaſy, and ſo rapid, from one to the other, was inconceivable. The handſome young man who had made her thoſe offers, had not however the air of a deceiver.

ceiver. He had talked to her ſo ſeriouſly! She had ſeen ſo much ſincerity in his eyes, and in his language!

'I ſhould eaſily have perceived it,' ſaid ſhe, 'if he had wanted to make a fool of me. And 'yet, why all this myſtery which he has ſo 'ſtrongly enjoined me? For making me happy, 'he requires me to love him: nothing more 'juſt; but ſurely he will conſent that my father 'ſhall partake of his benefits; why then conceal 'our proceedings from my father?' If Lauretta had had the idea of ſeduction and vice, ſhe would eaſily have comprehended wherefore Luzy demanded ſecrecy; but the diſcretion they had infuſed into her, went no farther than to teach her to decline the rough liberties of the village youths; and in the honeſt and reſpectful air of the Count, ſhe ſaw nothing againſt which ſhe was to be upon her guard.

Wholly taken up with theſe reflections, her head filled with the image of luxury and abundance, ſhe returns to her humble habitation; every thing there ſeemed changed. Lauretta, for the firſt time, was mortified at living under thatch. The plain moveables, which uſe had before made precious to her, were debaſed in her eyes; the domeſtick cares which ſhe had charged herſelf with, began to be diſagreeable; ſhe found no longer the ſame taſte in that bread to which labour gives a reliſh, and on that freſh ſtraw where ſhe ſlept ſo well, ſhe ſighed for gilded roofs, and a rich down bed.

It was much worſe the next day, when ſhe was obliged to return to labour, and to go on a burning hill, to ſupport the heat of the day. 'At Paris,' ſaid ſhe, 'I ſhould wake only to

'enjoy

'enjoy myſelf at my eaſe, without any other 'care than that of loving, and of pleaſing. His 'honour the Count aſſured me of it. How a-'miable the Count is! Of all the girls in the 'village he regarded only me; he even quitted 'the ladies of the caſtle for a poor country-girl. 'He is not proud, ſweet gentleman! And yet 'he might very well be ſo! One would have 'thought that I did him a favour in preferring 'him to the young fellows of the village: he 'thanked me for it with looks ſo tender! an air 'ſo humble and touching! and language, what 'an amiable ſweetneſs in his language! Though 'he had talked to the lady of the place, he could 'not have ſpoken more genteelly. By good luck, 'I was pretty well dreſt; but if he were to ſee 'me to-day! What clothes! What a condition 'am I in!'

The diſguſt at her ſituation only redoubled, during three days of fatigue and heavineſs, which ſhe had ſtill to ſuſtain before ſhe could again ſee the Count.

The moment, which they both expected with impatience, arrives. All the youth of the village are aſſembled at the neighbouring caſtle; and in a bower of linden-trees, the ſound of inſtruments ſoon gives the ſignal for the dance. Lauretta advances with her companions, no longer with that deliberate air which ſhe had at the village-feaſt, but with an air modeſt and timorous. This was to Luzy a new beauty, and ſhe appeared as one of the graces, timid and decent, inſtead of a lively and wanton nymph. He diſtinguiſhed her from the reſt in his ſalute, but without any ſymptom of correſpondence between them. He abſtained even from approaching her,

and

and delayed dancing with her, till another had ſet him the example. This other was the Chevalier de Soligny, who, ever ſince the village-feaſt, had never ceaſed talking of Lauretta in a ſtrain of rapture. Luzy imagined him a rival, and anxiouſly followed him with his eyes; but was needleſs for Lauretta to perceive his jealouſy, in order to remove it. In dancing with Soligny, her look was vague, her air indifferent, her behaviour cold and negligent. It came to Luzy's turn to dance with her, and he thought he ſaw, as he ſaluted her, all her graces animate themſelves, all her charms ſpring up in her countenance. The precious colouring of modeſty diffuſed itſelf there; a furtive, and almoſt imperceptible ſmile moved her roſy lips; and the favour of a touching look tranſported him with joy and love. His firſt emotion, had they been alone, would have been to fall at Lauretta's feet, to thank her, and to adore her; but he commands his very eyes to reſtrain the fire of their looks; his hand alone, in preſſing that of her whom his heart calls his love, expreſſes to her by tremblings his tranſports.

'Beautiful Lauretta,' ſaid he to her, after the dance, 'remove a little from your companions. I am impatient to know what you have 'reſolved.'—'Not to take one ſtep without the 'conſent of my father, and to follow his advice 'in every thing. If you mean me good, I would 'have him partake of it; if I follow you, I 'would have him conſent to it.'—'Ah, beware 'of conſulting him, it is he whom above all I 'ought to fear. There are formalities among 'you, previous to love and union, with which 'my title, my condition forbid me to comply.

'Your

'Your father would ſubject me to them; he 'would require impoſſibilities of me; and on my 'refuſal, he would accuſe me of having wanted 'to deceive you. He knows not how much I 'love you; but you, Lauretta, can you think 'me capable of doing you an injury?'—'Alas, 'no, I believe you to be goodneſs itſelf. You 'would be a great hypocrite if you were bad!' —'Dare then to truſt to me.'——'It is not 'that I diſtruſt you; but I cannot deal myſte-'riouſly with my father: I belong to him, I de-'pend on him. If what you propoſe is proper, 'he will conſent to it.'—'He will never con-'ſent to it. You will deſtroy me, you will re-'pent it, when too late; and you will be all 'your life condemned to thoſe vile labours which 'to be ſure you love, ſince you dare not aban-'don them. Ah, Lauretta! are theſe delicate 'hands made to cultivate the ground? Muſt the 'ſun deſtroy the colours of that beautiful com-'plexion? You, the charm of Nature, of all 'the Graces, all the Loves; you, Lauretta, 'will you wear yourſelf out in an obſcure and 'toilſome life! to be cloſed in becoming the 'wife of ſome rude villager! to grow old per-'haps in indigence, without having taſted any 'of thoſe pleaſures which ought to follow you 'perpetually! This is what you prefer to the 'delights of eaſe and affluence which I promiſe 'you. And on what do you found your reſo-'lution? On the fear of giving ſome moments 'of uneaſineſs to your father? Yes, your flight 'will afflict him; but afterwards, what will be 'his joy at ſeeing you rich by my favours, with 'which he alſo ſhall be loaded? What a pleaſ-'ing violence will you not do him, in oblig-

'ing

'ing him to quit his cottage, and give himſelf 'repoſe? For from that time I ſhall no longer 'have his denials to fear: my happineſs, yours, 'and his, will be aſſured for ever.'

Lauretta had a good deal of difficulty to withſtand the temptation, but ſhe did withſtand it; and but for the fatal accident which at laſt threw her again into the ſnare, the mere inſtinct of innocence would have ſufficed to preſerve her from it.

In a ſtorm which fell on the village of Coulange, the hail deſtroyed all the promiſed vintages and harveſts. The deſolation was general. During the ſtorm a thouſand mournful cries mingled with the roaring of the winds and claps of thunder; but when the ravage was accompliſhed, and a light, more dreadful than the darkneſs which had preceded it, let them ſee the vine-branches ſtripped and broken, the ears of corn hanging on their ſhattered ſtalks, the fruits of the trees beaten down or blaſted, nothing prevailed, throughout the deſolated country, but one vaſt and doleful ſilence: the roads were covered with a crowd of unfortunate people, pale, ſtruck with conſternation, and immoveable, who, with a melancholy eye contemplating their ruin, bewailed the loſs of the year, and ſaw nothing to come but deſpair, miſery and death; On the threſholds of the cottages, the diſconſolate mothers preſſed againſt their boſoms their tender nurſlings, exclaiming with tears in their Eyes: 'Who will give ſuck to you if we want bread?'

At the ſight of this calamity, the firſt thought which occured to Luzy, was the diſtreſs of Lauretta and her father. Impatient to fly to their relief, he veiled the tender intereſt he took in their

their fortunes, under a pretext of common pity to this multitude of wretches. 'Let us go to the village,' ſaid he to his company; 'let us 'carry conſolation thither. It will be but little 'expence to each of us, to ſave twenty families 'from the deſpair into which this diſaſter has 'plunged them. We have partaken their joy, 'let us go and partake of their grief.'

Theſe words made an impreſſion on their hearts, already moved by pity. The Marquis de Clancé ſet the example. He preſented himſelf to the peaſants, offered them aſſiſtance, promiſed them relief, and reſtored them to hope and courage. While tears of gratitude flowed around him, his company, of both ſexes, diſperſed themſelves through the village, entered the ſtraw huts, diſtributed their gifts, and taſted the rare and ſenſible delight of ſeeing themſelves adored by a grateful people. In the mean time Luzy ran like a madman, ſeeking the abode of Lauretta. It was ſhown him; he flies thither, and ſees a countryman ſitting at the door, his head inclined on his knees, and covering his face with both his hands, as if he feared to ſee the light again. This was Lauretta's father. 'My 'friend,' ſaid the Count to him, 'I ſee you are 'in conſternation; but do not deſpair: heaven 'is juſt, and there are compaſſionate hearts a-'mong mankind.' 'Ah, Sir,' replied the villager, lifting up his head, 'is it for a man who, after 'having ſerved his country twenty years, retired 'covered with wounds, and who has never ſince 'ceaſed to labour without relaxation, is it for 'him to ſtretch out his hand for charity? ought 'not the earth, which is bedewed with my 'ſweat, to give me ſubſiſtence? Shall I end my

'life

'life by begging my bread!' A ſoul ſo lofty, and ſo noble, in an obſcure perſon, aſtoniſhed the Count. 'You have ſerved then?' ſaid he. 'Yes, Sir, I took up arms under Berwick, I 'made the campaigns of Maurice. My father, 'before an unfortunate law-ſuit had ſtripped him 'of his eſtate, had ſufficient to ſupport me in 'the rank to which I was arrived. But at the 'ſame time that I was reduced, he was undone. 'We came here to conceal ourſelves; and out 'of the wreck of our fortune we purchaſed a lit-'tle farm, which I cultivated with my own 'hands. Our former condition was unknown, 'and this latter, to which I ſeemed born, gave 'me no ſhame. I maintained, and conſoled my 'father. I married, there was my misfortune; 'and it is now that I feel it.'—'Your father is 'is dead;'—'Alas, yes.'—Your wife?'—'She 'is happy in not having ſeen this diſmal day.'—'Have you a family?'—'I have but one daugh-'ter, and the poor girl!.... Do not you hear 'her ſighs? She hides herſelf, and keeps at a 'diſtance from me, that ſhe may not diſtract 'my ſoul.' Luzy would fain have ruſhed into the cottage where Lauretta was mourning; but he reſtrained himſelf, for fear of a diſcovery.

'Here,' ſaid he to the father, giving him his purſe: 'this aſſiſtance is very ſmall; but when 'you want, remember the Count de Luzy. I 'live at Paris.' On ſaying theſe words he went away, without giving Lauretta's father time to return him thanks.

What was the aſtoniſhment of the good old Bazil, on finding a conſiderable ſum in the purſe! Fifty louis, more than triple the revenue of his little

little vineyard! 'Come hither, my child,' cried he; 'look at him who goes yonder; it is not a 'man, it is an angel from heaven. But I am 'deceived. It is not poſſible that he ſhould in-'tend to give me ſo much. Go, Lauretta, run 'after him, and let him ſee that he has commit-'ted a miſtake.' Lauretta flies after Luzy, and having overtaken him, 'My father,' ſaid ſhe to him, 'cannot believe that you intended to make 'us ſo great a preſent. He ſends me to return 'it to you.'—'Ah, Lauretta, is not all that I 'have at your and your father's diſpoſal? Can 'I pay him too richly for having given birth 'to you? Carry back this poor gift: it is only 'an earneſt of my good will; but carefully con-'ceal from him the motive: tell him only that 'I am too happy in obliging a man of worth.' Lauretta was about to return him thanks. 'To-'morrow, ſaid he to her, 'at break of day, as 'I paſs the end of the village, I will receive, if 'you pleaſe, your thanks with your adieus.'—— 'What! do you go away to-morrow!'—'Yes, 'I go away the moſt paſſionate lover, and moſt 'unhappy of men.'—'At break of day?'—'that 'is about the hour when my father and I go out 'to work.'—Together?'—'No, he goes firſt: 'I have the care of the houſe upon me, and that 'delays me a little.'——'And do you paſs my 'road?'—'I croſs it above the village; but 'were it neceſſary to go out of my way, it is 'certainly the leaſt that I owe you for ſo many 'marks of friendſhip.'—Adieu then, Lauretta, 'till to-morrow. Let me ſee you, though but 'for a moment: that pleaſure will be the laſt of 'my life.'

Bazil, at Lauretta's return, had no more doubt of Luzy's benefactions. 'Ah, the good

'young

'young man! Ah, excellent heart!' cried he every inſtant. 'However, daughter, let us not 'neglect what the hail has left us. The leſs 'there is of it, the more care we muſt take of 'what is left.'

Lauretta was ſo touched with the Count's goodneſs, ſo afflicted at being the caſe of his unhappineſs, that ſhe wept all the night. 'Ah, if it 'were not for my father,' ſaid ſhe, what plea-'ſure ſhould I have had in following him!' The next day ſhe did not put on her holiday-clothes; but notwithſtanding the extreme ſimplicity of her dreſs, ſhe forgot not to mingle in it a little coquettry natural to her age. 'I ſhall ſee him 'no more: what does it ſignify whether I am 'more or leſs handſome in his eyes? For one 'moment it is not worth the trouble.' On ſaying theſe words, ſhe adjuſted her cap and her tucker. She bethought her of carrying him ſome fruit in her breakfaſt-baſket. 'He will not de-'ſpiſe them,' ſaid ſhe: 'I will tell him that I 'have gathered them.' And while ſhe ranged the fruit on a bed of vine-leaves, ſhe bedewed them with her tears. Her father was already ſet out; and with the grey light of the dawn was already mingled that gentle tint of gold and purple diffuſed by Aurora, when the poor girl, with a diſtracted heart, arrived alone at the end of the village. The inſtant after, ſhe ſaw the Count's poſt-coach appear, and at that ſight ſhe was troubled. The moment that he ſaw her, Luzy leaped out of his carriage; and coming towards her with an air of ſorrow, 'I am penetrated, beautiful Lauretta,' ſaid he to her, 'with the 'favour which you do me. I have at leaſt the 'conſolation to ſee you ſenſible of my pain, and

'I can

'I can believe that you are ſorry at having made 'me unhappy.' 'I am diſtreſſed at it,' replied Lauretta, 'and would give all the wealth you 'have beſtowed on us, never to have ſeen you.' —'And I, Lauretta, I would give all I have 'never to quit you as long as I live.'—'Alas, I 'ſhould think it depended only on yourſelf: my 'father could refuſe you nothing; he loves you, 'he reveres you.'—'Fathers are cruel; they 'would have us marry; and I cannot marry 'you: let us think no more of it; we are going 'to leave each other, to bid an eternal adieu; 'we who never, if you had been inclined to it, 'would have ceaſed to live for one another, to 'love each other, to enjoy together all the gifts 'which fortune had beſtowed on me, and all 'thoſe which love has conferred on you. Ah! 'you have no conception of the pleaſures which 'awaited us. If you had any idea of them! If 'you knew what you renounce!'——'Why, 'without knowing them I feel them. Be aſſur- 'ed, that ever ſince I have ſeen you, every thing 'that is not you, is nothing to me. At firſt my 'mind was dazzled with the fine things which 'you had promiſed me; but ſince all that is va- 'niſhed: I have thought of it no longer, I have 'thought only of you. Ah! if my father would 'agree to it!'—'What occaſion for his agree- 'ing to it! Do you wait for his conſent to love 'me! Does not our happineſs depend on our- 'ſelves? Love, fidelity, Lauretta, theſe are 'your titles, and my ſecurities. Are there any 'more ſacred, more inviolable? Ah! believe 'me, when the heart is beſtowed, every thing 'is over, and the hand has only to follow it. 'Give me then that hand, that I may kiſs it a

'thouſand

'thouſand times, that I may bedew it with 'my tears.' 'There it is, ſaid ſhe, weeping. 'It is mine,' cried he, 'this dear hand is mine, 'I hold it of love: to take it from me, they 'muſt take my life. Yes, Lauretta, I ſhall die 'at your feet, if we muſt part.' Lauretta really believed that he would literally die on loſing her. 'Alas!' ſaid ſhe, 'and ſhall I be the 'cauſe?'—'Yes, cruel girl, you will be the 'cauſe. You deſire my death, you do.'—— 'Oh! heaven, no: I would lay down my life 'for you.' 'Prove it then,' ſaid he, doing her at the ſame time a kind of violence, 'and follow 'me if you love me.' 'No,' ſaid ſhe, 'I can-'not, I cannot without the conſent of my fa-'ther.'—'Very well, leave, leave me then to 'my deſpair.' At theſe words Lauretta, pale and trembling, her heart pierced with ſorrow and fear, dared neither to hold Luzy's hand, nor let it go. Her eyes full of tears, followed with terror the diſtracted looks of the Count. 'Deign,' ſaid ſhe to him, in order to appeaſe him, 'deign to pity me, and to ſee me without 'anger. I hoped this teſtimony of my gratitude 'would have been agreeable to you; but I dare 'no longer offer it you.' 'What is it?' ſaid he: 'Fruit, and for me! Ah, you little ty-'rant, you inſult me. Give me poiſon.' And throwing down the baſket, he retired in a rage.

Lauretta took that emotion for hatred, and her heart already too much ſoftened, could not ſuppo t this laſt attack. Scarce had ſhe ſtrength to get away a few paces, and faint at the foot of a tree. Luzy, who followed her with his eyes, runs up and finds her bathed with tears, her boſom choaked with ſobs, pale, and almoſt lifeleſs.

He

He is diſtreſſed, he thinks at firſt only of recalling her to life; but ſoon as he ſees her ſpirits return, he avails himſelf of her weakneſs, and before ſhe is well recovered of her ſwooning, ſhe is already at a great diſtance from the village, in the Count's coach, and in the arms of her raviſher. 'Where am I?' ſaid ſhe on opening her eyes: 'Ah, my Lord Count, is it you! Are you 'carrying me back to the village!' 'Deareſt 'half of my ſoul' ſaid he to her, preſſing her againſt his boſom, 'I have lived to ſee the mo-'ment when our adieus almoſt coſt us both our 'lives. Let us put no more to that trial two 'hearts too weak to ſuſtain it.'

'I reſign myſelf to thee, my dear Lauretta; 'on thy lips I ſwear to live for thee alone.' 'I 'aſk no better lot,' ſaid ſhe to him, 'than to 'live alſo for you alone. But my father! Shall 'I leave my father? Has not he a right to diſ-'poſe of me?'—'Thy father, my Lauretta, 'ſhall be loaded with riches; he ſhall partake 'the happineſs of his daughter: we will be both 'his children. Depend on my tenderneſs to eaſe 'and conſole him. Come, let me catch thoſe 'tears, let me drop my own into thy boſom: 'they are the tears of joy, the tears of pleaſure.' The dangerous Luzy mingled with his language all the charms of ſeduction, and Lauretta was not inſenſible: while her father, uneaſy, afflicted, ſeeking his daughter, calling on her with loud cries, aſked after her through the whole village; and not ſeeing her again in the evening, and retiring diſtreſſed, in deſpair at having loſt her, that image preſents itſelf to his mind, wholly occupies it, and troubles it without ceaſing. It was neceſſary to beguile his grief.

Luzy

Luzy ran with his horſes, the blinds of his carriage were let down, his people were ſure and faithful, and Lauretta left behind her no trace of her flight. It was even eſſential to Luzy to conceal his having carried her off. He detached one of his domeſticks, who from a village quite out of the road, contrived to tranſmit to the miniſter of Coulange this billet, in which Luzy had diſguiſed his hand-writing. 'Tell Lauretta's father to 'be eaſy, that ſhe is well, and that the lady, 'who has taken her with her, will have the 'ſame care of her as of her own child. In a ſhort 'time he ſhall know what is become of her.'

This note, which was far from affording conſolation to the father, ſufficed to palliate the crime of elopement to the daughter. Love had penetrated into her ſoul; he laid open the avenues of it to pleaſure; and from that time the clouds of grief diſperſed, the tears dried up, ſorrow was appeaſed, and a tranſient, but profound oblivion of every thing but her lover, ſuffered her to taſte, without remorſe, the criminal happineſs of being his.

The kind of delirium, into which ſhe fell on arriving at Paris, completed the diſſipation of her ſoul. Her houſe was a fairy palace; every thing in it had the air of enchantment. The bath, the toilette, the ſupper, the delicious repoſe which love left her, were ſo many varied forms which voluptuouſneſs aſſumed, to ſeduce her through the medium of her ſenſes. When ſhe awaked, ſhe thought herſelf ſtill deceived by a dream. When ſhe roſe, ſhe ſaw herſelf ſurrounded with women, attentive to ſerve her, and jealous of pleaſing her. She, who had only ſtudied to obey, had only to deſire in order to be obeyed.

'You are queen here,' ſaid her lover, 'and I 'am your principal ſlave.'

Imagine, if it is poſſible, the ſurpriſe and tranſport of a young and ſimple country-girl, at ſeeing her fine black hair, ſo negligently tied till that time, the wavy ringlets of which nature alone had formed, now rounding into curls beneath the ply of art, and riſing in a diadem, beſpangled with flowers and diamonds; at ſeeing diſplayed to her eyes the moſt gallant ornaments, which ſeemed to ſollicit her choice; at ſeeing, I ſay, her beauty iſſue, radiant as from a cloud, and ſpring up again in the brilliant pannels which environed her, in order to multiply her charms. Nature had laviſhed on her all graces; but ſome of thoſe gifts had need of being cultivated, and the accompliſhments came in a croud to diſpute with each other the care of inſtructing her, and the glory of embelliſhing her. Luzy poſſeſſed and adored his conqueſt, intoxicated with joy and love.

In the mean time, the good Bazil was the moſt unhappy of fathers. Brave, full of honour, and above all jealous of his daughter's reputation; he had ſought her, expected her in vain, without publiſhing his uneaſineſs; and no body in the village was made acquainted with his misfortune. The miniſter came to aſſure him of it himſelf, by communicating to him the note which he had received. Bazil gave no credit to this note; but, diſſembling with the paſtor, 'My daughter is 'diſcreet,' ſaid he to him, 'but ſhe is young, 'ſimple, and credulous. Some lady has had a 'mind to take her into her ſervice, and has pre-'vailed on her to prevent my denial. Let us, 'for fear of ſcandal, huſh up this little impru-

'dence

'dence of youth, and leave the people to be-
'lieve that my daughter quitted me with my
'own conſent. The ſecret reſts with you; ſpare
'the daughter and the father.' The miniſter, a prudent and worthy man, promiſed and kept ſilence. But Bazil, devoured by chagrin, paſſed the days and nights in tears. 'What is become
'of her?' ſaid he: 'Is it a lady that ſhe has
'followed? Is there any ſo mad as to rob a father
'of his daughter, and to undertake to carry her
'off? No, no, it is ſome raviſher who has ſe-
'duced and ruined her. Ah, if I can diſcover
'him, either his blood or mine ſhall waſh out
'my injury.' He went himſelf to the village, whence they had brought the note. By the miniſter's informations he contrived to diſcover the perſon who had been charged with the meſſage; he examined him; but his anſwers only confuſed him the more. The very ſituation of the place ſerved only to miſlead him. It was ſix leagues out of the road which Luzy had taken, and lay quite acroſs the country. But had Bazil even combined the two circumſtances of the departure of the Count and his daughter's elopement, he would never have ſuſpected ſo virtuous a young man. As he confided his grief to nobody, nobody could give him any light. He groaned therefore within himſelf, in expectation of ſome caſual gleam to clear up his ſuſpicions. 'Oh, heaven,' ſaid he, 'it was in your wrath
'that you gave her to me! And I, mad as I
'was, congratulated myſelf on ſeeing her grow
'up and improve! What formed my pride, now
'conſtitutes my ſhame. Oh, that ſhe had died
'as ſoon as ſhe was born!'

Lauretta endeavoured to perſuade herſelf that

her father was eaſy, and the regret of having left him, touched her but faintly. Love, vanity, a taſte for pleaſures, a taſte ever ſo lively in its birth, the care of cultivating her talents; in ſhort, a thouſand amuſements, continually varied, divided her life, and filled her ſoul. Luzy, who loved her to idolatry, and who feared leſt he ſhould loſe her, expoſed her as little as poſſible in publick; but he contrived her all the means which myſtery has invented, of being inviſible amidſt the great world. This was enough for Lauretta: happy in pleaſing him whom ſhe loved, ſhe felt not that reſtleſs deſire, that want of being ſeen and admired, which alone brings out ſo many handſome women to our ſpectacles and gardens. Though Luzy, by the choice of a ſmall circle of amiable men, rendered his ſuppers amuſing, ſhe was taken up at them only with him; and ſhe was able to convince him of it without diſobliging any body elſe. The art of reconciling partialities to good manners, is the ſecret of delicate ſouls; coquettry ſtudies it; love knows it without having learnt it.

Six months paſſed away in that union, that ſweet intelligence of two hearts filled and raviſhed with each other, without wearineſs, without uneaſineſs, without any other jealouſy than that which makes us fear that we do not pleaſe ſo much as we love, and which renders us deſirous of combining every thing that can captivate a heart.

In this interval Lauretta's father had twice received news of his daughter, with preſents from the lady who had taken her into friendſhip. It was to the miniſter that Luzy directed. Remitted to the next poſt to the village by a faithful

ſervant,

ſervant, the packets came to hand anonymous; Bazil could not tell to whom to ſend them back; and then his refuſals would have created doubts of what he wiſhed to be believed, and he trembled leſt the curate ſhould have the ſame ſuſpicions with himſelf. 'Alas!' ſaid the good father to himſelf, 'my daughter is, perhaps, yet virtuous. Appearances accuſe her; but they are only appearances; and though my ſuſpicions ſhould be juſt, I muſt lament, but I ought not to diſhonour my child.'

Heaven owed ſome conſolation to the virtue of this worthy father; and it was heaven, without doubt, which brought about the accident I am going to relate.

The little wine trade which Bazil carried on, obliged him to come to Paris. As he was traverſing that immenſe city, he was ſtopped in the ſtreet by ſome carriages croſſing each other. The voice of a lady in a fright engaged his attention. He ſees ... He dares not believe his eyes ... Lauretta, his daughter, in a gilt glaſs chariot, ſuperbly dreſt, and crowned with diamonds. Her father would not have known her, if, perceiving him herſelf, ſurpriſe and confuſion had not made her ſhrink back and cover her face. At the movement which ſhe made to hide herſelf, and ſtill more at the cry which eſcaped her, he could not doubt but it was ſhe. While the carriages which were locked together were diſengaging, Bazil ſlips between the wall and his daughter's chariot, gets up to the ſtep of the chariot-door, and with a ſevere tone, ſays to Lauretta, 'Where do you live?' Lauretta, ſeiſed with fear and trembling, tells him her habitation. 'And what name do you go by?'—

'*Coulange*,' replied ſhe, looking down, 'from 'the place of my birth.'——'Of your birth! 'Ah, wretch!... This evening, at duſk, be at 'home, and alone.' At theſe words he gets down, and purſues his way.

The ſhock which Lauretta had received was not yet overcome, when ſhe found herſelf at home.

Luzy ſupped in the country. She was left to herſelf at the moment when ſhe had moſt need of counſel and ſupport. She was going to appear before her father, whom ſhe had betrayed, forſaken, and overwhelmed with grief and ſhame: her crime then preſented itſelf to her in the moſt odious form. She began to feel the vileneſs of her condition. The intoxication of love, the charms of pleaſure had baniſhed the thought; but as ſoon as the veil was fallen off, ſhe ſaw herſelf ſuch as ſhe was in the eyes of the world, and in the eyes of her father. Terrifyed at the examination and ſentence which ſhe was about to undergo, 'Wretch!' cried ſhe, melting into tears, 'where can I fly! where can I hide me! 'My father, honeſty itſelf, again finds me, gone 'aſtray, abandoned to vice, with a man who is 'nothing to me! O my Father! O terrible 'judge! How ſhall I appear before you?' It came more than once into her mind to avoid him and diſappear; but vice had not yet effaced from her ſoul the holy laws of nature. 'I to reduce 'him to deſpair,' ſaid ſhe; 'and after having 'merited his reproaches to draw his curſe upon 'me! No, though unworthy the name of his 'daughter, I revere that ſacred name. Though 'he came to kill me with his own hand, I ought 'to wait it, and to fall at his feet. But, no, a

'father

'father is always a father. Mine will be touch-
'ed with my tears. My age, my weakneſs,
'the Count's love, his favours, all plead for me;
'and when Luzy ſhall ſpeak, I ſhall no longer
'be ſo culpable.'

She would have been diſtreſſed if her people had been witneſſes of the humiliating ſcene which was preparing. By good luck ſhe had given out that ſhe ſupped with a friend, and her women had made themſelves a holiday that evening. It was eaſy for her to get rid of two footmen who attended her, and when her father arrived, ſhe received him herſelf.

'Are you alone?'—'Yes, Sir.'—He enters with emotion, and after having looked her in the face, in a ſorrowful and melancholy ſilence, 'What buſineſs have you here?' ſaid he. Lauretta anſwered by throwing herſelf at his feet, and bathing them with her tears. 'I ſee,' ſaid the father, caſting his eyes around him, 'in this 'apartment where every thing beſpakes riches 'and luxury, I ſee that vice is at its eaſe in this 'town. May I know who has taken care to en-'rich you in ſo ſhort a time, and from whom 'come this furniture, theſe clothes, that fine 'equipage in which I ſaw you?'—Lauretta ſtill replied only by tears and ſighs. 'Speak 'to me,' ſaid he, 'you ſhall weep afterwards; 'you will have time enough.'

At the recital of her ſtory, of which ſhe diſguiſed nothing, Bazil paſſed from aſtoniſhment to indignation. 'Luzy!' ſaid he, 'that worthy 'man!... Theſe then are the virtues of the 'great! The baſe wretch! In giving me his 'gold, did he think he paid me for my daugh-'ter? Theſe proud rich folks think, that the

'honour of the poor is a thing of no value, and 'that miſery ſets itſelf to ſale. He flattered him-'ſelf with confoling me! He promiſed you to 'do it! Unnatural man! how little does he 'know the ſoul of a Father! No, ever ſince I 'loſt thee, I have not had one moment without 'ſorrow, not one quarter of an hour of peaceful 'ſleep. By day, the ground which I cultivated 'was watered with my tears; in the night, 'while you forgot yourſelf, while you were loſ-'ing yourſelf in guilty pleaſures, your father, 'ſtretched on his ſtraw, tore his hair, and called 'on you with loud cries. Ah what! Have my 'groans never re-echoed to thy ſoul! Has the 'image of a father diſtreſſed never preſented it-'ſelf to your thought, never troubled your re-'poſe!' 'Oh! Heaven is my witneſs,' ſaid ſhe, 'that if ever I had thought I had occaſioned you 'ſo much ſorrow, I would have quitted every 'thing to fly to your arms. I revere you, I love 'you, I love you more than ever. Alas! what 'a father have I afflicted! At this very inſtant, 'when I expected to find in you an inexorable 'judge, I hear from your own mouth only re-'proaches full of gentleneſs. Ah, my father! 'when I fell at your feet I felt only ſhame and 'fear; but now it is with affection that you ſee 'me penetrated, and to the tears of repentance 'are joined thoſe of love!' 'Ah! I revive, I 'now find my daughter again,' cryed Bazil, raiſing her up. 'Your daughter, alas!' ſaid Lauretta, 'ſhe is no longer worthy of you.'— 'No, do not diſcourage thyſelf. Honour, Lau-'retta, is without doubt a great happineſs; in-'nocence a greater ſtill; and if I had the choice, 'I would rather have ſeen thee deprived of life.

'But

'But when innocence and honour are loſt, there 'ſtill remains one ineſtimable good; virtue 'which never periſhes, which we never loſe 'without return. We have only to wiſh for it, 'it ſprings up again in the ſoul; and when we 'think it extinguiſhed, a ſingle touch of remorſe 'gives birth to it a-new. This will conſole 'you, daughter, for the loſs of your innocence, 'and if your repentance be ſincere, heaven 'and your father are appeaſed. For the reſt, 'no body in the village knows your adventure; 'you may appear there again without ſhame.'— 'Where, my father?'—'At Coulange, whi-'ther I am going to carry you.' (Theſe words embarraſſed Lauretta.) 'Haſte,' continued Ba-zil, 'to ſtrip off thoſe ornaments of vice. Plain 'linen, a ſimple bodice, a white petticoat, theſe 'are the raiments of thy condition. Leave his 'envenomed gifts, to the wretch who has ſe-'duced you, and follow me without more de-'lay.'

One muſt have been poſſeſſed at this moment of the timid and tender ſoul of Lauretta, muſt have loved, like her, a father and a lover, to conceive, to feel the combat which aroſe in her feeble heart, between love and nature. The trouble and agitation of her ſpirits kept her immoveable and mute. 'Let us go,' ſaid the father, 'mo-'ments are precious.' 'Pardon me,' cryed Lauretta, falling again on her knees before him, 'pardon me, my father; be not offended if I 'am ſlow to obey you. You have read the bot-'tom of my ſoul. Luzy wants the name of 'huſband; but all the rights which the tende-'reſt love can give him, he has over me. I 'would fly him, detach myſelf from him, fol-

'low you though to death. But to ſteal away 'in his abſence, to leave him to believe that I 'have betrayed him!'—'How, wretch? and 'what ſignifies to you the opinion of a vile de- 'ceiver? and what are the rights of a paſſion 'which has ruined and diſhonoured you? 'You love him! you love your ſhame then. You 'prefer his vile favours to the innocence which 'he has robbed you of? You prefer to your fa- 'ther the moſt cruel of your enemies? You 'dare not fly him in his abſence, and quit him 'without his conſent! Ah! when you were to 'quit your father, to overwhelm him, to drive 'him to diſtraction, you were not then ſo timo- 'rous. And what do you expect from your ra- 'viſher? That he ſhould defend you? That he 'ſhould withdraw you from paternal authority? 'Oh! let him come; let him dare to drive me 'hence; I am alone, unarmed, enfeebled by 'age; but they ſhall ſee me extended on the 'threſhold of your door, calling for vengeance 'to God and man. Your lover himſelf, in or- 'der to get at thee, ſhall march over my body, 'and paſſers-by ſhall ſay with horrour, There is 'the father whom ſhe diſavows, and whom her 'lover tramples under his feet.'

'Ah! my father,' ſaid Lauretta terrifyed at 'this image, 'how little do you know the man 'whom you rail againſt ſo cruelly! Nothing is 'gentler, nothing more ſenſible. You will be 'to him reſpectable and ſacred.'—'Dare you 'talk to me of the reſpect of one who diſhonours 'me? Doſt thou hope that he may ſeduce me 'with his perfidious gentleneſs! I will not ſee 'him. If you can anſwer for him, I cannot 'anſwer for myſelf.'—'Well, do not ſee him, 'but permit me to ſee him, but for a moment.'

—'What

—'What do you aſk? me to leave you alone 'with him! Ah! though he ſhould take away 'my life, I would not ſhew him that complai-'ſance. While he was able to keep you from 'me it was his crime, it was thine, I was not 'anſwerable for it. But heaven now puts you again 'under my guard, and from this moment I an-'ſwer to heaven, for thee. Let us go, daugh-'ter, it is already dark; this is the inſtant for 'us to depart! reſolve: renounce thy father, 'or obey.'—'You pierce my heart.'—'Obey, 'I tell thee, or dread my curſe.' At theſe ter-rible words, the trembling Lauretta had no ſtrength to reply. She undreſſes herſelf before her father's eyes, and puts on, not without a flood of tears, the plain dreſs which he had pre-ſcribed to her. 'My father,' ſaid ſhe to him at the moment ſhe was preparing to follow him, 'dare I aſk, as the price of my obedience, one 'ſingle favour? You do not wiſh the death of 'him whom I ſacrifice to you. Suffer me to 'write to him two words, to inform him it is 'you that I obey, and that you oblige me to 'follow you.'—'What! that he may come to 'carry you off again, to ſteal you from me? 'No, I will leave no trace of you. Let him die 'of ſhame, he will do juſtice upon himſelf; but 'of love! never fear that; libertines never die 'of it.' Then, taking his daughter by the hand, he carried her out without noiſe; and the next morning, embarking on the Seine, they re-turned into their own country.

At midnight the Count arrives at his houſe, where he flatters himſelf pleaſure awaits, and love invites him, and finds all there in alarm and confuſion.

Lauretta's

Lauretta's people tell him with fright that they do not know what is become of her; that they have ſought her in vain; that ſhe had taken care to ſend them out of the way, and had feiſed that moment to elude their vigilance; that ſhe did not ſup at her friend's; and that on going off ſhe had left every thing behind her, even to her diamonds, and to the gown ſhe had worn that day.

'We muſt wait for her,' ſaid Luzy after a long ſilence. 'Do not go to bed: there is ſome-'thing incomprehenſible in this affair.'

Love, which ſeeks to flatter itſelf, began by conjectures to excuſe Lauretta; but finding them all deſtitute of probability, he delivered himſelf up to the moſt cruel ſuſpicions. 'An 'involuntary accident might have detained her; 'but in the abſence of her people to undreſs her-'ſelf; to make her eſcape alone, at duſk, to leave 'her houſe in uneaſineſs! all this,' ſaid he, 'clearly ſhews a premeditated flight. Has hea-'ven touched her? Is it remorſe that has deter-'mined her to fly me? Ah! why can I not at 'leaſt believe it! but if ſhe had taken an honeſt 'part, ſhe would have pity of me, ſhe would 'have written to me, though it were but two 'words, of conſolation and adieu. Her letter 'would not have betrayed her, and would have 'ſpared me ſuſpicions, grievous to me, and diſ-'honourable to her. Lauretta, O heaven! can-'dour itſelf, innocence, truth! Lauretta un-'faithful and perfidious! ſhe who but this very 'morning . . . No, no, it is incredible . . . and 'yet it is but too true.' Every moment, every reflection ſeemed a new proof; but hope and confidence could not quit his heart. He

ſtruggled

ſtruggled againſt perſuaſion, as an expiring man againſt death. 'If ſhe were to return,' ſaid he, 'if ſhe were to return innocent and faithful! 'Ah, would my fortune, my life, all my love 'be ſufficient to repair the injury I do her! 'What pleaſure ſhould I have in confeſſing my-'ſelf in fault! With what tranſports, with what 'tears, would I efface the crime of having ac-'cuſed her! Alas! I dare not flatter myſelf with 'being unjuſt: I am not ſo happy.'

There is no body who, in the uneaſineſs and ardour of expectation, has not ſometimes experienced at Paris the torment of liſtening to the noiſe of the coaches, each of which we take for that which we expect, and each of which by turns arrives, and carries away, as it paſſes, the hope which it has juſt excited. The unhappy Luzy was till three in the morning in this cruel perplexity. Every carriage which he heard was, perhaps, that which was bringing back Lauretta; at laſt hope, ſo often deceived, gave place to deſpair. 'I am betrayed,' ſaid he, 'I can no 'longer doubt it. It is a plot which has been 'concealed from me. The careſſes of the per-'fidious creature ſerved only the better to diſ-'guiſe it. They have artfully choſen the day 'on which I was to ſup in the country. She has 'left every thing behind her, to let me under-'ſtand ſhe has no farther occaſion for my preſents. 'Another without doubt overwhelms her with 'them. She would have been aſhamed to have 'had any thing of mine. The moſt feeble pledge 'of my love would have been a perpetual re-'proach of her treachery and ingratitude. She 'would forget me, in order to deliver herſelf 'up in peace to the man ſhe prefers. Ah the

'perjured

'perjured wretch! does she hope to find any 'one who loves her like me? I loved her too 'well, I gave myself too much up to it. Her 'desires, by being perpetually prevented, be-'came extinct. These are the ways of women. 'They grow tired of every thing, even of be-'ing happy. Ah! can'st thou be so now, per-'fidious girl! Can'st thou be so, and think of 'me? Of me! do I say? What signify to her 'my love and grief? Ah, while I can scarce 'restrain my cries, while I bathe her bed with 'my tears, another, perhaps, . . . Horrible 'thought! I cannot support it. I will know 'this rival, and if the fire which burns in my 'breast has not consumed me before day, I will 'not die without vengeance. It is doubtless 'some one of those false friends whom I have 'imprudently introduced to her. Soligny, per-'haps . . . He was taken with her, when we 'saw her in her own village. . . . She was sim-'ple and sincere then. How is she changed! 'He wanted to see her again, and I, poor easy 'fool! thinking myself beloved, believing it 'impossible for Lauretta to be unfaithful, 'brought my rival to her. I may be deceived, 'but in short it is he whom I suspect. I will be 'satisfyed instantly. Follow me,' said he to one of his domesticks; and it was scarce day-light, when knocking at the Chevalier's door, Luzy asked to see him. 'He is not at home, Sir,' said the Swiss.—'Not at home!'—'No, Sir, he is 'in the country.'—'How long since?'—'Since 'yesterday evening.'—'At what hour?'—'A-'bout dusk.'—'And what part of the country 'is he gone to?'—'We do not know: he has 'taken only his valet de chambre with him.'—

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'In what carriage?'—'In his vis-a-vis.'—'Is 'his abſence to be long?'—'He will not be 'back this fortnight, and has ordered me to take 'care of his letters.'—'At his return tell him I 'was here, and that I deſire to ſee him.'

At laſt, ſaid he, on going away, 'I am con-'vinced. Every thing agrees. Nothing re-'mains but to diſcover where they have conceal-'ed themſelves. I will tear her from his arms, 'the perfidious wretch! and I will have the 'pleaſure of waſhing away with his blood my 'injury and her treachery!'

His reſearches were ineffectual. The Chevalier's journey was a myſtery which he could not penetrate. Luzy was therefore fifteen days on the rack; and the full perſuaſion that Soligny was the raviſher, diverted him from every other idea.

In his impatience, he ſent every morning to know if his rival was returned. At laſt he was told, that he was juſt arrived. He flies to him, enflamed with anger; and the favourable reception given him by the Chevalier only irritated him more. 'My dear Count,' ſaid Soligny, 'you have been very earneſt in your enquiries 'for me; how can I ſerve you?' 'In ridding 'me,' replyed Luzy, at the ſame time turning pale, 'either of a life which I deteſt, or of a 'rival whom I hate. You have carried off 'my miſtreſs; nothing remains but to pluck 'out my heart.'—'My friend,' ſaid the Chevalier to him, 'I have as great a deſire to have my 'throat cut as yourſelf, for I am quite mad with 'vexation; but I have no quarrel with you; if 'you pleaſe let us underſtand each other. Lau-'retta has been carried off, you ſay; I am very

'ſorry

'ſorry for it; ſhe was a charming girl; but upon honour it was not by me. Not that I pique myſelf upon any delicacy in that point. In love I forgive my own friends, and allow myſelf theſe little petty-larcenies; and though I heartily love you, yet, if Lauretta had thought proper to deceive you for me, rather than for another, I ſhould not have been cruel. But as to carrying them off, I don't like that, that is too ſerious a buſineſs for me; and if you have no other reaſon for killing me, I adviſe you to let me live, and to breakfaſt with me.' Though the Chevalier's language had very much the air of frankneſs, Luzy ſtill retained his ſuſpicions. 'You diſappeared,' ſaid he, 'the ſame evening, at the ſame hour; you lay hid for a fortnight; I know beſides that you loved her, and that you had an inclination for her at the very time that I took her.'

'You are in luck,' ſaid Soligny, 'that in the humour I am now in, I love you enough to come to an explanation. Lauretta went off the ſame evening with me; I have nothing to ſay to that: it is one of thoſe critical rencounters, which form the intrigue of romances. I thought Lauretta beautiful as an angel, and I had an inclination for her, it is true; but if you will cut the throats of all who are guilty of the ſame crime, mercy upon one half of Paris! The important article then is the ſecret of my journey, and abſence? Very well, I will explain that matter.'

'I was in love with Madam de Blanſon, or rather I was in love with her riches, her birth, her credit at court; for that woman has every thing in her favour, except herſelf. You

'know,

'know, that if ſhe is neither young nor handſome, to make amends ſhe has a deal of ſenſibility, and is eaſily ſet on fire. I had got into her good graces, and ſaw no impoſſibility to be, as it is called, happy, without proceeding to marriage. But marriage was my point; and under cover of that reſpectful timidity, inſeparable from a delicate love, I eluded all opportunities of making an ill uſe of her weakneſs. So much reſerve diſconcerted her. She never ſaw, ſhe ſaid, a man ſo timorous and ſo much of the novice. I was as baſhful as a young girl: my modeſty abſolutely tantalized her. In ſhort, not to trouble you with all the arts I employed for three months to ſuſtain attacks without ſurrendering, never did coquette ſtrive ſo much to kindle ineffectual deſires. My conduct was a maſter-piece of prudence and dexterity: but the widow was too hard for me. I am her dupe: yes, my friend, ſhe has ſurpriſed my credulous innocence. Seeing that ſhe muſt attack me regularly, ſhe talked of marriage. Nothing was more advantageous than her propoſals. Her fortune was to be entirely in my power. There remained only one bar to our happineſs. I was very young, and ſhe was not ſufficiently acquainted with my character. In order to try one another, ſhe propoſed to me to paſs ſome days together, tête à tête, in the country.' 'A fortnight's ſolitude and liberty, ſaid ſhe, will give us a truer idea of each other, than two years at Paris. I gave into the ſnare, and ſhe managed ſo well that I forgot my reſolution. How frail is man, and how little certain of himſelf! Having taken up the part of huſband, I was ob-

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'obliged to maintain it, and I gave her the beſt 'opinion of me that I poſſibly could; but in a 'ſhort time ſhe thought ſhe perceived that my 'love abated. It was in vain that I proteſted it 'was the ſame; ſhe told me that ſhe was not to 'be deceived with empty words, and that ſhe 'plainly ſaw the change in me. In ſhort, this 'morning I received my diſcharge in form from 'under her own hands. It runs in theſe words. 'The ſlender tryal which I have made of your 'ſentiments is ſufficient. Begone, Sir, when 'ever you pleaſe. I would have a huſband whoſe 'attentions ſhould never relax; who loves me 'always, and always the ſame.' Are you ſatiſ-'fied? There is my adventure. You ſee it is 'quite of a different nature from that which 'you attribute to me. I have been carryed off, 'as well as your Lauretta; heaven grant, 'that they have not done by her as they did 'by me! But now you are undeceived with re-'ſpect to me, have you no other ſuſpicion?' 'I 'am loſt in them,' ſaid Luzy: 'forgive my 'ſorrow, my deſpair, and my love, the ſtep 'which I have juſt taken.' 'Pſhaw!' replied Soligny: 'nothing was more juſt. If I had ta-'ken away your miſtreſs, I muſt have given you 'ſatisfaction. There is nothing in it; ſo much 'the better: and ſo we are good friends. Will you 'breakfaſt with me?'--'I would die'--'that would 'be going rather too far. Preſerve that remedy 'for more ſerious diſgraces. Lauretta is a pretty 'girl, though a little knaviſh baggage; endea-'vour to ſee her again; but if you cannot get 'her, take another, and the ſooner the better.'

While Luzy remained inconſolable, and was ſcattering his money with a liberal hand, in or-

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der to diſcover ſome traces of Lauretta, ſhe was at her father's, lamenting her error, or rather her lover.

Bazil had given out in the village, that he had not been able to live without his daughter, and that he had been to fetch her home. They found her ſtill improved. Her graces were now blown; and that which is called the air of Paris had given her new charms, even in the eyes of the villagers. The ardour of the youths who had ſought her was renewed, and became ſtill more lively. But her father refuſed them all. 'You 'ſhall never marry in my life-time,' ſaid he. 'I would not impoſe upon any one. Work and 'lament with me. I have juſt ſent back to your 'unworthy lover all his preſents. We owe 'him nothing now, except our ſhame.'

Lauretta, humble and ſubmiſſive, obeyed her father, without complaining, and without daring to raiſe her eyes towards him. It was to her an incredible difficulty to reſume the habitude of indigence and labour. Her feet, grown tender, were wounded; her delicate hands were made ſore; but theſe were ſlight evils. 'The pains 'of the body are nothing,' ſaid ſhe, groaning; 'thoſe of the ſoul are much more grievous.'

Though Luzy was perpetually preſent to her, and her heart was not able to detach itſelf from him, ſhe had no longer either the hope or deſire of returning to him. She knew what bitterneſs her going aſtray had diffuſed over the life of her unhappy father; and though ſhe had been at liberty to quit him again, ſhe would not have conſented to it. But the image of the grief, in which ſhe had left her lover, purſued her, and was her torment. The right he had to accuſe her of

perfidy

perfidy and ingratitude, was a freſh cauſe of anguiſh.—'If I could but write to him! But I 'have neither the liberty, nor the means. Not 'content with obliging me to abandon him, they 'would have me forget him. I ſhall ſooner 'forget myſelf; and it is as impoſſible for me to 'hate him as to forget him. If he was culpa-'ble, his love was the cauſe, and I cannot pu-'niſh him for it. In all that he did he meant 'only my happineſs and my father's. He de-'ceived himſelf, he led me aſtray; but at his 'age one thinks only of love. Yes, I owe it to 'him, I owe it to myſelf, to clear up my con-'duct; and in that point alone my father ſhall 'not be obeyed.' The difficulty now was only to procure the means of writing; but her father, without intending it, had ſpared her the trouble.

One evening Luzy, retiring more afflicted than ever, received an anonymous packet. The hand in which the direction was written was unknown to him; but the poſt-mark told him enough. He opens it with precipitation; he diſcovers the purſe which he had given Bazil, with the fifty louis which he had left in it, and two like ſums which he had ſent to him. 'I ſee the 'whole affair,' ſaid he: 'I have been diſcover-'ed. The father in indignation ſends me back 'my preſents. Haughty and ſevere, as I per-'ceived him. As ſoon as knew where his daugh-'ter was, he came to fetch her, and forced her 'to follow him.' That moment he aſſembles ſuch of his domeſticks as attended Lauretta. He examines them, he aſks if any one among them had not ſeen a countryman, whom he deſcribes to them. One of them actually remembers that,

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the very day that ſhe went away, a man actually like the perſon he deſcribes got up to the boot of Lauretta's coach, and ſpoke to her for a moment. 'Come quickly,' cried Luzy, 'put 'poſt-horſes to my chaiſe!'

The ſecond night, being arrived at ſome leagues from Coulange, he cauſes the ſervant who attended him to diſguiſe himſelf like a peaſant, ſends him to get information, and in the mean while endeavours to take reſt. Alas. There is none for the ſoul of a lover in ſo violent a ſituation. He counts the minutes from the departure of his emiſſary to his return.

'Sir,' ſaid the ſervant, 'good news! Lau-'retta is at Coulange, at her father's.'—'Ah, 'I breathe again.'—'They talk even of mar-'rying her.'—'Of marrying her!—'I muſt 'ſee her.'—'You will find her in the vineyard: 'ſhe works there all day.'—'Juſt heaven! 'what hardſhip! Come, I will lie concealed; 'and you, under that diſguiſe, ſhall watch the 'moment when ſhe is alone. Let us not loſe 'an inſtant: away!'

Luzy's emiſſary had told him truth. A rich perſon in his ſituation, had offered himſelf as a match for Lauretta; and the miniſter had ſent to Bazil to perſuade him to accept it.

In the mean time, Lauretta toiled in the vineyard, and thought of the unhappy Luzy. Luzy arrives, and perceives her at a diſtance: he advances with precaution, ſees her alone, runs up, throws himſelf before her, and ſtretches out his arms. At the noiſe which he made acroſs the vine-leaves, ſhe raiſes her head, and turns her eyes; 'My God!' cryed ſhe.... Surpriſe and joy took from her the uſe of her voice.

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She was in his arms, all trembling, without having been able to mention his name. 'Ah, Luzy,' ſaid ſhe, at laſt, 'is it you! This is what 'I aſked of heaven. I am innocent in your 'eyes: that is enough; I will endure the reſt. 'Adieu, Luzy, adieu for ever! Be gone, and 'lament your Lauretta. She reproaches you 'with nothing. You will be dear to her to her 'laſt breath.' 'I,' cried he, locking her in his arms, as if they were about to tear her from him again, 'I quit you! Thou half of myſelf, I live 'without thee, far from thee! No, there is not 'that power on earth that ſhall ſeparate us.'— 'There is one which is ſacred to me: the will 'of my father. Ah, my loſt friend! If you 'had known the profound grief into which my 'flight plunged him, ſenſible and good as you 'are, you would have reſtored me to his tears. 'To take me away from him a ſecond time, 'or to plunge a dagger into his boſom, would be 'to me the ſame thing. You know me too well 'to require it of me; you are too humane to 'wiſh it yourſelf. Caſt away a hope which I 'have loſt, adieu. Heaven grant that I may ex-'piate my fault! But I can ſcarce reproach my-'ſelf for it. Adieu, I ſay: my father is com-'ing: it would be dreadful that he ſhould find 'us together.' 'It is what I would have,' ſaid Luzy: 'I wait for him.'—'Ah, you are now 'going to redouble my ſorrows.'

At that inſtant Bazil arrives; and Luzy, advancing ſome paces to meet him, throws himſelf at his feet. 'Who are you? What do you 'want?' ſaid Bazil, aſtoniſhed at firſt. But as ſoon as he had fixed his eyes on him, 'Wretch!' cried he, drawing back, 'be gone,

'take

'take yourſelf away from my ſight.'—'No, I 'ſhall die at your feet, if you will not vouch-'ſafe to hear me.'——'After having ruined, 'diſhonoured the daughter, dare you preſent 'yourſelf to the father!'—'I am to blame, I 'confeſs, and here are the means to puniſh 'me,' ſaid he, preſenting his ſword. 'But if 'you will hear me, I hope that you will have 'compaſſion on me.'—'Ah,' ſaid Bazil, look-ing at the ſword, 'if I were as baſe, as cruel as 'you!.. See,' ſaid he to his daughter, 'how 'groveling is vice, and how great the ſhame of 'it, ſince it obliges a man to crouch at the feet 'of his fellow-creature, and to ſuſtain his con-'tempt.' 'If I were only vicious,' replied Lu-zy haughtily, 'far from imploring you, I ſhould 'brave you. Attribute my humiliation only to 'that which is the moſt honeſt and moſt noble 'cauſe in nature, to love, to virtue itſelf, to the 'deſire which I have of expiating a fault, excu-'ſable perhaps, and with which I reproach my-'ſelf ſo cruelly, only becauſe I have a good 'heart.' Then, with all the eloquence of ſen-timent, he endeavoured to juſtify himſelf, at-tributing the whole to the warmth of youth, and the intoxication of paſſion.

'The world is very happy,' replied Bazil, 'that your paſſion has not been that of money! 'You would have been a Cartouche. (Luzy chafed at this diſcourſe.) Yes, a Cartouche. 'And why not? Will you have the meanneſs 'to think that innocence and honour are of leſs 'value than riches and life? Have you not a-'vailed yourſelf of the weakneſs, the infirmity 'of this unhappy girl, in order to rob her of 'theſe two treaſures? And me her father, do

'you

'you think you have done me a leſs injury, than
'if you had murdered me? A Cartouche is bro-
'ken on the wheel, becauſe he ſteals riches,
'with which we may diſpenſe; but for you,
'who have taken from us what a well-educated
'girl, what a virtuous father cannot loſe with-
'out dying, what have you merited? They call
'you noble, and you believe yourſelf ſo. Theſe
'are the marks of that nobility of which you are
'ſo vain. At a time of diſtreſs, when the moſt
'wicked of mankind would have had pity on
'me, you accoſt me, you pretend to pity me,
'and you ſay in your heart, 'There now
'is a wretch who has no other conſolation in the
'world, but his daughter: ſhe is the only bleſ-
'ſing heaven has left him; and to-morrow I
'will carry her away from him.' Yes, barba-
'rian! yes, villain! this is what paſſed in your
'ſoul. And I, poor credulous fool, I admired
'you, loaded you with bleſſings, and prayed
'heaven to accompliſh all your wiſhes; while
'all your wiſhes were to ſeduce my daughter!
'What do I ſay, wretch as I am! I delivered
'her up to you, I engaged her to run after you,
'in truth to reſtore to you that gold, that poi-
'ſon, with which you thought to corrupt me:
'it ſeemed as if heaven had warned me that it
'was a deſtructive and treacherous gift; I re-
'ſiſted the impulſe, and forced myſelf to believe
'you compaſſionate and generous; you were
'only perfidious and unpitying; and the hand
'which I would have kiſſed, which I would
'have watered with my tears, was preparing to
'pluck out my heart. Behold, continued he,
baring his boſom, and ſhowing his ſcars, 'behold
'what a man you have diſhonoured! I have ſhed
'for my country, more blood than you have

'in

'in all your veins: and you, Sir, what are your 'exploits? Diſtreſſing a father, and debauching 'his daughter! empoiſoning my days and hers. 'See there the unhappy victim of your ſeduction, ſee her there ſteeping in her tears her daily 'bread. Brought up in the ſimplicity of an innocent and laborious life, ſhe loved it; ſhe 'now deteſts it: you have rendered inſupportable labour and poverty to her: ſhe has loſt her 'joy with her innocence, and ſhe can no longer 'lift up her eyes without bluſhing. But that 'which diſtracts me, that which I will never 'forgive you, is, that you have ſhut the heart 'of my daughter againſt me; you have extinguiſhed the ſentiments of nature in her ſoul; 'you have made the company of her father a 'torment to her; perhaps, alas! ... I dare not 'ſpeak it ... perhaps I am her averſion.'

'Ah, my father!' cried Lauretta, who till then had remained in dejection and confuſion, 'Ah, my father! this is puniſhing me too 'much. I merit every thing except the re'proach of having ceaſed to love you.' On ſaying theſe words, ſhe fell at his feet, and kiſſed the duſt of them. Luzy proſtrated himſelf before him, and in an exceſs of tenderneſs, 'My father,' 'ſaid he, 'pardon her, pardon me, embrace 'your children; and if the raviſher of Lauretta 'be not too unworthy of the name of her huſband, I conjure you to grant me that title.'

This return would have ſoftened a harder heart than Bazil's. 'If there were,' ſaid he to Luzy, 'any other way of reſtoring to me my 'honour, and to both of you your innocence, I 'would refuſe this. But it is the only one; I ac'cept it, and much more for your ſakes than for

'my own; for I neither expect, and will have 'nothing from you, and will die in cultivating 'my vineyard.'

The love of Luzy and Lauretta was conſecrated at the foot of the altar. Many people ſaid that he had done a mean thing, and he agreed to it: 'But it is not,' ſaid he, 'that which 'they attribute to me. The ſhame was in do-'ing the wrong, and not in repairing it.'

There was no way of engaging Bazil to quit his humble habitation. After having tried every art to draw him to Paris, Madam de Luzy obtained of her huſband to purchaſe an eſtate near Coulange, and the good father conſented at laſt to go there and ſpend his old age.

Two hearts formed for virtue were raviſhed in having recovered it. That image of celeſtial pleaſures, the agreement of love and innocence, left them nothing more to deſire, but to ſee the fruits of ſo ſweet an union. Heaven heard the wiſh of nature; and Bazil, before he died, embraced his grand-children.

A Wife of Ten Thousand!

'ENJOY, Madam, all the comforts of 'your houſe; do the honours, and be the 'delight of it; but never trouble your head a-'bout the conduct of it.' This, near eight years ago, was the language of the haughty Melidor to his wife. The advice was agreeable to follow; and accordingly the young and lively Acelia had pretty well followed it. But reaſon came

came with age; and the kind of intoxication, in which ſhe had been plunged, vaniſhed.

Melidor had had the misfortune of being born in opulence. Brought up among the young nobility of the kingdom, inveſted on entering into the world with a conſiderable charge, maſter of his wealth from the age of reaſon, it became to him the age of follies. His prevailing foible was to want to live like a man of quality. He made himſelf familiar with the great, carefully ſtudied their manners; and as the noble and ſimple graces of a true courtier are not eaſy to imitate, it was to the airs of our little lords that he attached himſelf, as to good models.

He would have thought it a diſgrace not to have been able to ſay, *My domains, and my vaſſals:* he laid out, therefore, the better part of his ready money in the purchaſe of lands, the revenue of which was ſmall indeed, but the rights whereof were magnificent.

He had heard ſay, that the great lords had ſtewards who robbed them, creditors whom they did not pay, and miſtreſſes who were not very faithful; he conſidered it, therefore, as beneath him to look into his accounts, to pay his debts, or to be delicate in love.

His eldeſt ſon had ſcarce attained his ſeventh year; he took particular care to chooſe him a governour that was ſelf-ſufficient and a coxcomb, who had no other merit than that of making a handſome bow.

This governour was the dependent of an humble friend of Melidor's, called Duranſon, naturally an inſolent, low fellow, a kind of dog, who barked at all paſſers-by, and careſſed only his maſter. The part he acted was that of a miſan-

throp, full of arrogance and moroſeneſs. Rich, but covetous, he found it convenient to have a good houſe which was not his own, and pleaſures of every ſort of which another bore the expence. A ſilent obſerver of all that paſſed, one might ſee him ſunk in his armed chair, deciding on every thing with a few cutting words, and ſetting himſelf up as a family-cenſor. Woe to the good man who was not an object of fear! He tore him to pieces without mercy, if his air had diſpleaſed him ever ſo little.

Melidor took the moroſeneſs of Duranſon for philoſophy. He was conſcious that he was his hero; and the incenſe of a man of his character was to him a delicate perfume. The rough flatterer took care not to expoſe himſelf to the world. If he applauded Melidor in publick, it was only with a glance, or a complaiſant ſmile: he kept his panegyrick for a tête-à-tête; but then he gave him a full meal of it. Melidor could ſcarce believe himſelf endowed with ſuch eminent merit; but there muſt be ſomething in it, for his friend Duranſon, who aſſured him of it, was the fartheſt in the world from being a nauſeous flatterer.

It was not enough to pleaſe the huſband; Duranſon had alſo flattered himſelf with ſeducing the young wife. He began by ſpeaking well of her alone, and very ill of all others of her age and condition. But ſhe was as little touched with his ſatires as his encomiums. He ſuſpected that he was deſpiſed; he endeavoured to make himſelf dreaded, and by ſome malignant and ſharp ſtrokes he made her perceive that it was at any time in his power to be ſevere even on herſelf. That ſucceeded no better. 'I may have

'foibles,'

'foibles,' ſaid ſhe to him, 'and I allow them 'to be attacked, but at a little more diſtance, if 'you pleaſe. A perpetual cenſor would be al-'moſt as tireſome to me as a ſervile flatterer.'

By the reſolute tone which ſhe aſſumed, Duranſon ſaw plainly that, in order to reduce her, he muſt go a little farther about. 'Let me en-'deavour,' ſaid he, 'to make her ſtand in need 'of me: let me afflict her in order to conſole 'her; and when her wounded vanity ſhall 'throw her off her guard, I will ſeiſe one of 'thoſe moments of diſguſt. The confident of a 'woman's ſorrows is often the happy avenger of 'them.

'I pity you, Madam,' ſaid he, 'and I ought 'no longer to conceal from you what afflicts me 'ſenſibly. For ſome time paſt Melidor goes a-'ſtray; he is guilty of follies; and if he goes 'on in this manner, he will no longer have oc-'caſion for ſuch a friend as myſelf.'

Whether it was levity, or diſſimulation with a man whom ſhe did not eſteem, Acelia received this information without deigning to appear moved. He dwelt upon it, made a merit of his own zeal, and declaimed againſt the caprices and irregularities of huſbands of the age; ſaid that he had made Melidor bluſh at it: and oppoſing the charms of Acelia to the dowdies which touched her huſband, he grew ſo very warm, that he forgot his part, and ſoon betrayed himſelf. She ſmiled with diſdain at the knave's want of addreſs. 'That is what I call a friend,' ſaid ſhe; 'and not thoſe baſe adulators, whom vice 'keeps in pay in order to flatter and ſerve it I 'am very ſure, for example, that you have told 'Melidor to his face, all that you have juſt now

'ſaid to me.'—'Yes, Madam, and a great 'deal more.'—'You will then, to be ſure, 'have the courage to reproach him with his 'wrongs before me; to overwhelm him with 'them.'—'Before you, Madam! Ah, beware of 'making a noiſe: that would be to alienate him 'irrecoverably. He is proud; he would be hurt 'at having cauſe to bluſh before you. He would 'conſider me only as a perfidious friend. And 'who knows to what hidden motive he would 'impute our correſpondence?'——'No mat-'ter; I will convict him, and confront him in 'you with a witneſs whom he cannot diſprove.' —'No, Madam, no, you will be undone. It 'is by diſſembling wrongs that a woman go-'verns; diſcretion, gentleneſs and your charms, 'theſe are your advantages over us. Complaint 'and reproach only ſerve to exaſperate us; and 'of all the methods of correcting, the worſt is 'to put us to confuſion.' He was in the right, but to no purpoſe. Acelia would hear nothing. 'I know,' ſaid ſhe, 'all my riſk; but though 'it were to come to a rupture, I would not act, 'by my ſilence, the convenient woman to my 'huſband.' He ſtrove in vain to diſſuade her; he was reduced to aſk her pardon, and to entreat her not to puniſh him for a zeal which, perhaps, was imprudent. 'And this then,' ſaid Acelia, 'is that courageous freedom of yours which no-'thing can intimidate? I ſhall be more diſcreet 'than you; but remember, Duranſon, never 'hereafter to ſay any thing of your friends that 'you would not have them hear again. As to 'me, whatever injury my huſband does me, I 'forbid you ever to ſpeak to me about it.'

Duranſon, enraged at ſo ſcurvy a reception, vowed the deſtruction of Acelia; but it was neceſſary

neceſſary firſt to involve her in the ruin of her huſband.

No body at Paris has ſo many friends as an opulent and prodigal man. Melidor's friends, at his ſuppers, never failed to commend him to his face; and they had the kindneſs to wait till they were withdrawn from table, before they ridiculed him. His creditors, who daily increaſed, were not ſo complaiſant; but his friend Duranſon kept off the throng. He knew, he ſaid, the way to impoſe on thoſe knaves. However, as they were not all equally timid, there was a neceſſity from time to time, in order to appeaſe the moſt turbulent, to have recourſe to expedients; and Duranſon, under a fictitious name, coming to the ſuccour of his friend, lent him money on pledges on the moſt uſurious contracts.

The more Melidor's affairs became diſordered, the leſs he wiſhed to hear of them. 'Manage it,' ſaid he to his ſteward, 'I will ſign, 'but leave me at peace.' At laſt the ſteward came to tell him that his capital was exhauſted, and his effects were going to be ſeiſed. Melidor fell on his agent, and told him he was a rogue. 'Call me what you pleaſe,' replied the cool ſteward; 'but you are in debt, and muſt pay, 'and becauſe you fail, they are going to ſue 'you.'

Melidor ordered the faithful Duranſon to be called, and aſked him if he had no reſource.—— 'You have one very ſure one: let your wife 'engage herſelf.'—'Ah! but will ſhe conſent 'to it?'—'To be ſure! can ſhe heſitate, when 'your honour is at ſtake? However, do not a-'larm her; treat the matter as a trifle, and let

'her ſee in this engagement nothing more than
'a common form, which ſhe cannot avoid ful-
'filling.' Melidor embraced his friend, and re-
'paired to his wife.

Acelia, wholly devoted to her amuſements, knew nothing of what paſſed. But happily heaven had endued her with a juſt way of thinking, and a firm ſoul. 'I am juſt come, Madam,' ſaid her huſband, 'from ſeeing your new car-
'riage: it will be exquiſite. Your new horſes
'are arrived: Ah, my dear, what a beautiful
'ſet! the Count de Piſa trains them. They
'are full of ſpirit; but he will break them: he
'is the beſt driver in all Paris.'

Though Acelia was accuſtomed to the gallantries of her huſband, ſhe could not help being ſurpriſed and pleaſed with this laſt. 'I ruin
'you!' ſaid ſhe.—'Prithee, my dear, what
'better uſe can I make of my fortune than to
'employ it in what pleaſes you? Give a
'looſe to your deſires, and enjoy them at your
'eaſe. I have nothing which is not at your ſer-
'vice; and I flatter myſelf that you think ſo.
'A propos,' added he careleſsly, 'I have ſome
'deeds to ſettle, which the common forms of
'buſineſs will require you to ſign. But we will
'talk of that this evening. At preſent I can
'think of nothing but the colour of your carri-
'age; the varniſher only waits for your direc-
'ions.' 'I will conſider of it,' ſaid ſhe; and as ſoon as he was gone, ſhe fell into reflections on what had paſſed between them.

Acelia was a rich heireſs, and the law ſecured her the diſpoſal of her fortune. She perceived the conſequences of the engagement propoſed to her; and in the evening, inſtead of going to the play,

play, ſhe went to her attorney. What was her ſurpriſe, on learning that Melidor was reduced to the moſt ruinous expedients! She employed the time of the play in getting intelligence and advice.

At her return ſhe concealed her uneaſineſs before the company at ſupper; but when her huſband, tête-à-tête with her, propoſed to her to engage for him, 'I will not abandon you,' ſaid ſhe, 'if you will deign to truſt yourſelf to me; 'but I require an entire confidence, a full pow-'er of ruling my houſe.'

Melidor was humbled at the thought of having his wife for a tutor: he told her that ſhe had no reaſon to be alarmed, and that he would not ſuffer her to take ſo diſagreeable a charge upon herſelf.——'No, Sir, I have neglected it too 'long: it is a fault which I will no longer be 'guilty of.' He gave up the point, and the creditors being aſſembled the next day, 'Gen-'tlemen,' ſaid he to them, 'your viſits are 'troubleſome to me; my wife would be glad to 'talk with you; ſee and ſettle with her.' 'Gen-'tlemen,' ſaid Acelia to them in a prudent, but aſſured tone, 'though my eſtate be my chil-'drens, I am ſenſible that I ought to aſſiſt their 'father with it; but I will have it done fairly. 'Thoſe who are honeſt ſhall find me punctual; 'but I will not ſatisfy knaves for the follies of a 'ſpendthrift. Bring me your demands to-mor-'row. I require only time to examine them; 'I will not let you wait.'

From the moment that Acelia ſaw herſelf at the head of her houſe, ſhe was no longer the ſame woman. She caſt her eyes on her paſt life, and ſaw nothing in it but the flutter of a thou-

ſand idle occupations. 'Are theſe,' ſaid ſhe, 'the duties of a mother of a family? Is it then 'at the price of her honour and of her peace, 'that ſhe muſt pay for handſome ſuppers, rich 'equipages, and brilliant trifles?'

'Sir,' ſaid ſhe to her huſband, 'to-morrow 'I ſhall have the ſtate of your debts; I muſt 'have that of your revenues: order your ſtew-'ard to come to me.' The ſteward came and gave in his accounts. Nothing was more clear: far from having money in hand, it was found that he had advanced, and there was due to him above double the amount of his accumulated wages. 'I ſee,' ſaid Acelia, 'that the ſteward un-'derſtands his accounts better than we do. We 'have nothing to do but to pay him, thanking 'him at the ſame time that we are not more in 'his debt.'—'To pay him!' ſaid Melidor in a low voice; 'and with what?'—'out of my 'fund. The firſt ſtep in œconomy is to turn off 'the ſteward.'

A reform was inſtantly made in the houſe-hold, and in the expence; and Acelia ſetting the example, 'Courage, Sir,' ſaid ſhe, 'let us cut 'to the quick: we ſacrifice only our vanity.'—'But decency, Madam?'—'Decency, Sir, 'conſiſts in not diſſipating the ſubſtance of ano-'ther, and the innocent enjoyment of one's 'own.'—'But, Madam, at diſcharging your 'people you pay them; and that is exhauſting 'our only reſource.'—'Be eaſy, my dear: I 'have trinkets and diamonds; and by ſacrificing 'only theſe ornaments, I make myſelf one 'which is well worth them all.'

Next day the creditors arrive, and Acelia gives them audience. Thoſe of whom Melidor had

had purchaſed moveables of value, or ſuperfluous knick-knacks, conſented to take them back again, with a fair allowance. The reſt, enchanted with the reception and good intentions of Acelia, unanimouſly agreed to abide by her deciſions; and her conciliatory graces united all minds.

One alone, with an air ſomewhat confuſed, ſaid that he could not abate any thing. He had valuable effects in pledge; and on the liſt of monies borrowed, he was ſet down for an enormous uſury. Acelia detained him by himſelf, in order to bend him if poſſible. 'I, Madam!' ſaid he, preſſed by her reproaches; 'I come not 'here on my own account; and M. Duranſon 'had better have excuſed me from playing this 'villainous part.'—'Duranſon, ſay you! what! 'it is he who under your name . . . .' 'He himſelf.'—'So our pledges are in his hands.'—'Yes, and a writing from me, in which I de'clare there is nothing due to me.'—'And may 'I have a duplicate of that writing?'—'Cer'tainly, and preſently if you will, for the name 'of an uſurer ſits heavy on me.' This was a weapon for Acelia; but it was not yet time to enlighten Melidor, and incenſe Duranſon. She thought it neceſſary to diſſemble ſome time longer.

Her lawyer, who came to ſee her, found that in twenty-four hours ſhe had laid by a good part of her revenue, and diſcharged a multitude of debts. 'You proceed, ſaid he, upon good prin'ciples. Oeconomy is of all reſources the moſt 'ſure, and the eaſieſt. It enriches one in an 'inſtant with all the wealth that has been 'diſſipated.'

While

While they were diſcourſing, Melidor in confuſion afflicted himſelf at ſeeing his houſe ſtripped. 'Nay, Sir,' ſaid his wife, 'conſole your-'ſelf: I retrench nothing but your follies.' But he conſidered only the world, and the humiliation of a fall. He retired in conſternation, leaving Acelia with her lawyer.

A young woman has in buſineſs a prodigious advantage: beſides inſpiring hope and the deſire of pleaſing, ſhe intereſts, and diſpoſes to a kind of eaſineſs which men have not for one another. Nature contrives a ſecret intelligence between the two ſexes. Every obſtacle is removed before them, every difficulty vaniſhes; and inſtead of treating one another as enemies, like man to man, with a woman we deliver ourſelves up as friends. Acelia was more than once a proof of it; and her lawyer exerted a zeal and affection in ſerving her, which he would not have had for her huſband.

'Madam,' ſaid he to her, on ſtating the balance of Melidor's eſtate with his debts, 'I find 'enough to acquit them. But effects ſold in a 'hurry commonly go at a low price. Let us 'ſuppoſe that his are free; they will more than 'anſwer the two hundred thouſand crowns which 'he owes; and if you will engage yourſelf for 'him, it is not impoſſible to reduce this multi-'tude of ruinous debts to a ſmall number of more 'ſimple and leſs burthenſome articles.' 'Do 'it, Sir,' ſaid Acelia, 'I conſent: I engage 'myſelf for my huſband; but let it be without 'his knowledge.' The lawyer acted with prudence; and Acelia was authoriſed to contract in Melidor's name.

Melidor had acted openly with her in every article

article but one, which he had not dared to declare to his wife. In the night Acelia, hearing him groan, endeavoured tenderly to comfort him. 'You do not know all,' ſaid he; and theſe words were followed with a profound ſilence. Acelia preſſed him in vain; ſhame ſtopped his mouth. 'What!' ſaid ſhe, 'have you ſorrows 'which you dare not confide to me! have you 'a friend more tender, more ſure, more indul-'gent?' 'The greater right you have to my 'eſteem,' replyed Melidor, 'the more I ought 'to bluſh at the confeſſion which I have yet to 'make to you. You have heard of the cour-'teſan Eleonora . . . What ſhall I ſay to you? 'She has notes from me for upwards of fifty 'thouſand crowns.' Acelia ſaw with joy the moment to regain the heart of her huſband. 'It 'is not a time for reproaching you,' ſaid ſhe, 'with a folly of which you are aſhamed, and to 'which my own diſſipation has, perhaps, ex-'poſed you. Let us repair and forget our 'wrongs: this laſt is not without remedy.' Melidor had no conception that a woman, till that time ſo full of levity, ſhould all of a ſudden have acquired ſo much conſideration. Acelia was not leſs ſurpriſed that a man, ſo haughty and vain, ſhould ſuddenly become ſo modeſt. 'May it not 'be happy for us,' ſaid they to each other, 'that 'we have fallen into misfortune?'

The next day Acelia, having conſidered well, went in perſon to Eleonora's. 'You know not,' ſaid ſhe to her, 'who is come to ſee you? It is 'a rival.' And without any further preparation ſhe told her name. 'Madam,' ſaid Eleonora, 'I am confounded at the honour you do me. 'I am ſenſible I have done you wrong; but my

'condition

'condition muſt be my excuſe. Melidor is to
'blame, and on ſeeing you I blame him myſelf:
'he is more unjuſt than I imagined.' 'Ma-
'dam,' ſaid Acelia, 'I complain neither of you
'nor of him. It is a puniſhment due to a thought-
'leſs woman to have a libertine huſband; and I
'have at leaſt the pleaſure of ſeeing that Melidor
'has ſtill ſome delicacy in his taſte. You have
'underſtanding, and appearance of decency and
'graces worthy to embelliſh virtue.'——'You
'view me, Madam, with too much indulgence;
'which convinces me of the truth of what has
'been often told me, that the moſt virtuous wo-
'men are not thoſe who are moſt ſevere on us.
'As they have nothing to envy us, they have
'the goodneſs to pity us. Thoſe who reſemble
'us are much more rigid! they tear us to pieces,
'while they imitate us.' 'I will tell you,' re-
plyed Acelia meaning to bring her to her pur-
poſe, 'what we blame moſt in perſons of your
'way of life; it is not that weakneſs of which
'ſo many women have cauſe to bluſh, but a paſ-
'ſion ſtill more odious. The fire of youth, the
'reliſh of pleaſures, the attraction of a volup-
'tuous and unconfined life, ſometimes even ſen-
'timent itſelf, for I can believe you ſuſceptible
'of it, all this may have its excuſe; but in re-
'nouncing the modeſty of a woman, you are at
'leaſt the more obliged to have that of a man;
'and is there not a kind of honeſty which you
'do not renounce?'—'Yes without doubt.'—
'Very well; tell me then, does that honeſty
'permit you to make an ill uſe of the intoxicati-
'on and folly of a lover, to ſuch a degree as to
'require, and to accept of his mad engagements,
'that are ruinous to his family? Melidor, for

'example,

'example, has given you notes for fifty thou-
'sand crowns; and do you perceive the conse-
'quence of them, and how much room there is
'to be severe against such a seduction?' 'Ma-
'dam,' replyed Eleonora, 'it was a voluntary
'gift; and M. Duranson can witness for me
'that I have refused much larger.'——'You
'know M. Duranson?'——'Yes, Madam; it
'was he that put Melidor into my hands; and
'I was willing on that account to acquit him of
'all his own promises.'——'Very well: he has
'set down his own article then to his friend's
'account.'——'He told me so, and I imagined
'that Melidor had approved of it. As to the
'rest, Melidor was at his own liberty; I have
'nothing of his but what he has given me, and
'nothing in my opinion can be more fairly ac-
'quired.'——'You think so; but would you
'think so, if you were the child that is stripped
'for it? Put yourself in the place of a mother
'of a family, whose husband ruins her in this
'manner; who is on the point of seeing him dis-
'honoured, pursued, driven from his house,
'deprived of his estate, obliged to conceal him-
'self from the eyes of the world, and to leave
'his wife and children a prey to shame and grief;
'put yourself for one moment in the place of
'that miserable and distressed woman, and judge
'yourself, in that condition. What steps would
'not you take, Mademoiselle? You would
'without doubt have recourse to the laws which
'superintend our morals. Your complaints,
'and your tears would put in their claim against
'an odious surprise, and the voice of nature and
'of equity would rise up in your favour. Yes,
'Mademoiselle, the laws would rage against

'poison;

'poiſon; and the gift of pleaſing is poiſon, 'when we make an ill uſe of it. It attacks not 'life; but it attacks reaſon and honour; and if, 'in the intoxication which it occaſions, mad ſa-'crifices are required and obtained of a man, 'what you call free gifts are in reality robberies. 'This is what any other would ſay, what you 'would ſay perhaps in my place yourſelf. But 'I am more moderate. There is ſomewhat due 'to you; I am come to pay you: but nobly, 'and not madly. It is ſix months that Melidor 'has been your lover, and in giving you a thou-'ſand guineas you will confeſs that he is magni-'ficent.' Eleonora ſoftened and confounded, 'had not the courage to refuſe. She took Me-lidor's notes, and followed Acelia to her law-yer.

'Would not you like,' ſaid Acelia to her, on arriving there, 'an annuity of a hundred gui-'neas, rather than this ſum in hand, which will 'ſoon be diſſipated? The way to detach one's 'ſelf from vice, child, is to ſet one's-ſelf above 'want; and I am of opinion, that you will one 'day be glad to have it in your power to be 'virtuous.'

Eleonora kiſſing Acelia's hand, and letting fall ſome tears, 'Ah, Madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'under 'your features how amiable and touching is vir-'tue! If I have the happineſs to return to it, 'my heart will owe that return to you.'

The lawyer, charmed with Acelia, informed her that the two hundred thouſand crowns were ready in his hands, and that they waited her or-ders. She departed tranſported with joy, and on ſeeing Melidor again, 'there are your notes,' ſaid ſhe; 'it was very hard to part with them.'

'Write

'Write no more ſo tender!' His friend Duranſon was preſent; and by the dull air of Melidor, ſhe plainly ſaw that he had made him aſhamed of having reſigned himſelf to his wife. 'You receive them very coldly,' ſaid ſhe to her huſband, 'conſidering they come from ſo dear 'a hand.'——'Would you have me, Madam, 'rejoice at being the talk of all Paris? They 'ſpeak of nothing but my ruin; and you make 'it ſo very publick, that my friends themſelves 'are not able to deny it.'—'Your friends then, 'Sir, had ſome way of remedying it without 'noiſe? They are come probably to offer you 'their credit, and their good offices? M. Du'ranſon, for example . . .,' 'I, Madam! I can 'do nothing; but I think that without ſuch a 'diſgraceful publication, it would have been ea'ſy to find reſources.' 'Yes, reſources which 'leave none? My huſband has made too much 'uſe of them; you know it better than any bo'dy. As for the diſgrace which you affix to the 'publication of our misfortunes, I know how 'great your delicacy is, and I eſteem it as I 'ought.'—'Madam! I am an honeſt man, and 'it is well known.'—'It ought to be known, 'for you tell all the world of it; but as Meli'dor will have no more love-intrigues to form, 'your honeſty grows uſeleſs.' Melidor, at theſe words, took fire himſelf, and told his wife, that it was an affront to him to inſult his friend. She was about to anſwer, but without deigning to hear her, he retired in a rage, and Duranſon followed him.

Acelia was not the leaſt ſhaken by this; and leaving them to conſpire together, devoted herſelf entirely to the care of her family. Her ſon's governour,

governour, ſince their failure, thought his office beneath him, and plainly told them his mind. He was diſcharged that very evening, and in his place came a good abbè, ſimple, modeſt, and ſufficiently learned, whom ſhe entreated to be their friend, and to infuſe his own morals into his pupil.

Melidor, whom Duranſon had taught to conſider the aſcendant which his wife had aſſumed, as the utmoſt mortification, was incenſed at hearing that the governour was diſcharged. 'Yes, Sir,' ſaid ſhe to him, 'I give my ſon 'the example and direction of a wiſe man inſtead 'of a coxcomb; I mean alſo to rid you of an 'inſolent paraſite, who makes you pay for his 'pleaſures. Theſe are the injuries I do you, I 'confeſs them, and you may make them pub-'lick.' 'It is odious,' replied Melidor, without liſtening to her, 'it is odious to avail your-'ſelf of the condition to which I am reduced, 'to preſcribe laws to me. No, Madam, my 'misfortune is not ſuch as to degrade me into 'your ſlave. It was your duty to enter into the 'engagement which I propoſed to you: you 'have declined it; you are no longer dear to 'me, and your cares are uſeleſs. If I have run 'out, it was for you: the only remedy to my 'misfortune, is to remove the cauſe, and to-'morrow we ſeparate.'—'No, Sir, this is not 'the proper juncture. In a little time you ſhall 'peaceably enjoy a reputable fortune; you ſhall 'be free, and eaſy, and happy. Then, after 'having re-eſtabliſhed your honour, and your 'peace, I ſhall ſee whether I ought to give place 'to the workers of your ruin, and to leave you, 'by way of puniſhment, at the brink of the

'abyſs,

'abyſs, whence I am going to draw you. Till 'then we are inſeparable, and my duty and your 'misfortune are inviolable ties to me. For the 'reſt, you ſhall judge to-morrow what a man he 'is whom you prefer to me. I will give you 'proofs of his perfidy, before his face, and I 'renounce all claim to your eſteem, if he dares 'diſavow them.'

Melidor, ſhaken by the generous firmneſs of Acelia, was diſtracted all night between anger and gratitude. But in the morning he received a letter, which threw him into deſpair. They writ to him, that nothing was talked of at court but his luxury, his extravagance, and the misfortune which was the fruit of it; that every body blamed him loudly; and that they propoſed nothing leſs than to oblige him to quit his charge. 'Read,' ſaid he, on ſeeing Acelia, 'read, Madam, and tremble at the condition to 'which you have reduced me.' 'Oh, my 'friend,' ſaid he to Duranſon, who arrived juſt at that inſtant, 'I am undone: you foretold it 'to me. The buſtle ſhe has made diſhonours 'me. They are taking away my place.' Duranſon pretended to be overcome with the news. 'Be not afraid,' ſaid Acelia to him; 'your ſe'curity is good. You will loſe nothing by it, 'but the monſtrous uſury which you would ex'tort from your friend.' 'Yes, Melidor, he 'is our uſurer, our lender upon pledges.'—— 'I, Madam!'—'Yes, Sir, you yourſelf, and I 'have the proof in my hands.' 'There it is,' ſaid ſhe to her huſband; 'but this is not all: 'this worthy friend made you pay Eleonora for 'the favours which he had received from her; 'he had the preſumption to want to ſeduce

'your

'your wife, by informing her of your amours, 'at the ſame time that he ruined you under a 'borrowed name.' 'Ah, this is too much,' ſaid Duranſon, and he roſe to depart. 'One 'word more,' ſaid Acelia to him. 'You ſhall 'be unmaſked in an hour, known by the city 'and the court, and marked every where with 'infamy, if you do not, this very inſtant, car-'ry to my lawyer's, where I am going to wait 'for you, both the pledges and the notes which 'you have of Melidor's.' Duranſon turned pale, was confuſed, diſappeared, and left Melidor confounded and immoveable, with indignation and aſtoniſhment.

'Courage, my dear,' ſaid Acelia to her huſband. 'I anſwer for laying the ſtorm. 'Adieu. 'This evening it ſhall be appeaſed.'

She repairs to the attorney's, becomes bound, receives the two hundred thouſand crowns, diſcharges his debts, tears the bills, beginning with thoſe of Duranſon, who had prudently done as he was ordered. From thence ſhe takes a poſt-chaiſe, and repairs immediately to court.

The miniſter did not diſſemble his diſcontent, nor the reſolution which had been taken to oblige Melidor to ſell his place. 'I do not at-'tempt to excuſe him,' ſaid ſhe: Luxury is a 'folly in our ſituation, I confeſs; but it has 'been my folly rather than my huſband's. His 'complaiſance has been his only fault; and ah, 'Sir, what will not men do for a wife whom 'they love! I was young and handſome in 'his eyes; my huſband conſulted my deſires 'rather than his own means; he knew no fear, 'nor misfortune, but that of diſpleaſing me: 'this was his imprudence; it is now repaired:

'he

'he owes nothing more than my portion, and 'I make him the ſacrifice of it.'—'What, Ma-'dam!' cried the miniſter, 'have you become 'bound for him?'—'Yes, Sir, who ought to 'repair his misfortune, but ſhe who occaſioned 'it? Yes, Sir, I have engaged myſelf, but 'thereby I have acquired the right of managing 'his eſtate, and of enſuring my childrens for-'tune. He does not know what I have done for 'him, and he allows me full power to diſpoſe of 'every thing. I am at the head of my family, 'and the whole of it is already reduced to the 'moſt ſevere œconomy. Here, in two words, 'is what I have done, and what I propoſe to do.' She then entered into ſome details, which the miniſter was graciouſly pleaſed to hear. But,' continued ſhe, 'the friendſhip, the eſteem, the 'confidence of my huſband, all is loſt to me, if 'you puniſh him with a fault for which he muſt 'reproach me till I ſhall have effaced it. You are 'juſt, ſenſible, and humane; for what would 'you puniſh him? For having loved the other 'half of himſelf too much? for having forgot 'himſelf, and ſacrificed himſelf for me? I ſhall 'then be odious to him; and he will have rea-'ſon perpetually to repeat to my children the 'error and diſhonour into which their mother 'ſhall have plunged him. To whom would you 'make ſatisfaction by puniſhing him? To the 'publick? Ah! Sir, it is an envious, wicked 'publick, unworthy of that complaiſance. As 'to that part of the publick which is indifferent 'and juſt, leave us to give it a ſight much more 'uſeful, and more touching, than that of our 'ruin. It ſhall ſee that a diſcreet woman can 'reclaim an honeſt huſband, and that there are,

'to

'to well-diſpoſed hearts, inexhauſtible reſources 'in courage and virtue. Our reformation will 'be an example; and if it be honourable to us 'to ſet it, it will be glorious to follow it; where-'as, if the puniſhment of an imprudence which 'hurts us alone, exceeds the fault, and ſurvives 'it, they will, perhaps, be incenſed to no pur-'poſe, at ſeeing us unhappy without being cri-'minal.'

The miniſter liſtened with aſtoniſhment. 'Far from being any obſtacle to your intenti-'ons,' ſaid he, 'Madam, I will ſecond them, 'even in puniſhing your huſband. He muſt re-'nounce all title to his place.'—'Ah, Sir!'—'I have diſpoſed of it in favour of your ſon, and 'it is out of my regard, out of reſpect for you, 'that I leave the ſurvivorſhip to the father.' Acelia's ſurpriſe, at obtaining from the miniſter a favour inſtead of a puniſhment, made her almoſt fall at his feet. 'Sir,' ſaid ſhe to him, 'it 'is worthy yourſelf to correct, in this manner, 'the father of a family. The tears which you 'ſee flow, are the expreſſion of my gratitude. 'My children, my huſband, and myſelf, ſhall 'never ceaſe to bleſs you.'

Melidor waited Acelia with terror; and uneaſineſs gave place to joy, when he learnt with what gentleneſs, his diſſipation was puniſhed. 'Well,' ſaid Acelia, embracing him, 'are we 'to part to-day? Have you ſtill any good friend 'whom you prefer to your wife?'

It is well known with what eaſe reports in Paris are ſpread, and deſtroyed as ſoon as propagated: Melidor's misfortune had been the news of the day; his re-eſtabliſhment, or rather the noble part which his wife had acted, cauſed a kind

of

of revolution in people's minds, and in their converſation. They talked of nothing but the wiſdom and reſolution of Acelia; and when ſhe appeared abroad, with the modeſt and free air of a perſon who neither braves nor fears the looks of the publick, ſhe was received with a reſpect which ſhe had never before inſpired. It was then that ſhe perceived the value of the conſideration which virtue gives; and the homages which had been paid to her youth and beauty, had never flattered her ſo much.

Melidor, more timid, or more vain, knew not what air to aſſume, nor what countenance to wear. 'Let us wear,' ſaid his wife, the air of 'confeſſing frankly, that we have been imprudent, and that we are become diſcreet. Nobody has any thing to reproach us with; let 'us not humiliate ourſelves. If they ſee us 'glad of being amended, they will eſteem us 'the more.'——'And with what eyes,' ſaid he, 'will you look upon that multitude of falſe 'friends, who have abandoned us?'—'With 'the ſame eyes that I have always ſeen them, 'as people whom pleaſure attracts, and who fly 'away at its departure. What right had you 'to depend upon them? Was it for them that 'your feaſts were made? The houſe of a rich 'man is a theatre, in which every one thinks he 'has paid for his place, when he has filled it a-'greeably. The ſhow ended, every one re-'tires, acquitted of all demands on them. 'This is a diſagreeable reflection; but in loſing 'the illuſion of being loved, you convert an a-'greeable error into an uſeful experience. And 'it is with this remedy, as with many others: 'the bitterneſs forms its efficacy. View then

'the

'the world as it is, without being mortified at 'having miſtaken it, without boaſting that you 'know it better. Above all, let nobody be 'informed of our little quarrels: let neither of 'us ſeem to have given way to the other; but 'let it appear, that the ſame ſpirit animates 'and actuates us both. Though it be not ſo 'great a ſhame as it is accounted, to ſuffer one's 'ſelf to be guided by a wife, I would not have 'them know that it was I who determined 'you.'

Melidor owed every thing to his wife, but nothing touched him ſo ſenſibly as this mark of delicacy, and he was ſo ingenuous as to confeſs it. Acelia had another view beſides flattering the vanity of her huſband. She wanted to engage him, by his vanity itſelf, to follow the plan which ſhe had traced out to him. 'If he ſees 'all the world perſuaded,' ſaid ſhe, 'that he 'has acted only according to his own pleaſure, 'he will ſoon believe it himſelf, as well as the 'reſt of the world: we ſtand to our own reſolu-'tions by this ſentiment of liberty, which reſiſts 'thoſe of others; and the moſt eſſential point in 'the art of leading people, is that of concealing 'from them that they are led.' Acelia took care, therefore, to reflect on her huſband thoſe praiſes which were beſtowed on her; and Melidor, on his ſide, ſpoke of her with nothing but eſteem.

However, ſhe dreaded, on his account, the ſolitude and ſilence of her houſe. There is no keeping in a man who grows dull and weary; and before Melidor could fall into ſome employment, it was neceſſary he ſhould have amuſements. Acelia took care to form for him a ſociety,

ciety, not numerous but well-choſen. 'I in-'vite you not to feaſts,' ſaid ſhe to the ladies whom ſhe had engaged; 'but inſtead of pomp, 'we ſhall have pleaſure. I will give you a hear-'ty ſupper, which ſhall coſt nothing; we will 'there drink in freedom to the health of our 'friends; perhaps, alſo, we ſhall laugh there, 'a circumſtance uncommon enough in the 'world.' She kept her promiſe; and her huſband alone ſtill regretted the opulence in which he had lived. Not that he did not try to accuſtom himſelf to a plain way of life; but one would have thought that the ſame void had taken poſſeſſion of his ſoul and of his houſe. His eyes and and ears, habituated to tumult, were as it were ſtupified with calm and repoſe. He ſtill viewed with envy thoſe who were ruining themſelves, like himſelf; and Paris, where he found himſelf condemned to privations, in the midſt of enjoyments, became odious to him.

Acelia, who perceived it, and who purſued her plan with that conſtancy which is found only in women, propoſed to him to go and ſee the lands which they had bought. But, before ſetting out, ſhe charged her lawyer to hire her, inſtead of the hôtel which they occupied, a houſe genteelly plain, to live in at their return.

Of three eſtates, which Melidor had, the two moſt honourable produced ſcarce a third of the intereſt of the purchaſe-money. It was reſolved, therefore, that he ſhould ſell them. The other having been long neglected, required only improvement to become an excellent eſtate. 'This 'is the eſtate we muſt keep,' ſaid Acelia: 'let 'us employ all our care in raiſing its value. It 'is a wholeſome air, an agreeable proſpect, and

'a fertile ſoil; we will paſs the pleaſant part of 'the year there; and, believe me, we will love 'one another there. Your wife will not have 'the airs, the caprices, the art of coquettes, 'but a ſincere and tender friendſhip; which 'will conſtitute, if you partake it, your happi-'neſs, mine, that of our children, and the joy 'of our family. I know not how it is, but ſince 'I breathe the air of the country, my pleaſures 'are more ſimple and natural; happineſs ſeems 'more within my reach, more acceſſible to my 'deſires; I ſee it pure, and without clouds, in 'the innocence of rural manners; and I have, 'for the firſt time, the idea of the ſerenity of 'an innocent life, which flows in peace to the 'very end.' Melidor heard his wife with complaiſance, and conſolation diffuſed itſelf over his ſoul like a delicious balm.

He conſented, not without repugnance, to the ſale of thoſe of his lands whoſe rights had flattered him the moſt; and the good lawyer managed ſo well, that, in the ſpace of ſix months, Melidor found himſelf indebted to nobody in the world.

Nothing now remained, but to ſtrengthen him againſt the bent of habit; and Acelia, who knew his foible, did not deſpair of extinguiſhing in him the reliſh of luxury, by a taſte more diſcreet and ſatisfactory. The eſtate which they had reſerved, preſented a vaſt field for uſeful labours; and Acelia bethought her of forming a little council of huſbandmen for the direction of them. This council was compoſed of ſeven honeſt, ſenſible villagers, to whom ſhe gave a dinner every Sunday. This dinner was called the Banquet of the ſeven Wiſe Men. The council was held at table,

ble, and Melidor, Acelia, and the little Abbè, aſſiſted at the deliberations. The quality of ſoils, and the culture which ſuited them; the choice of the plants and ſeeds, the eſtabliſhment of new farms, and the diviſion of the ground into woods, paſturages, and corn-fields; the diſtribution of the flocks, deſtined for fattening and labour, the direction and employment of the waters, plantations and encloſures, and even the ſmalleſt particulars of rural œconomy were treated in the council. Our ſages, glaſs in hand, animated and enlightened each other; to hear them, one might have imagined that one ſaw treaſures buried in the earth, which waited only for hands to come and dig them out.

Melidor was flattered with this hope, and above all with the kind of domination which he ſhould exerciſe in the conduct of theſe labours; but he did not think that he had means ſufficient to carry them into execution. 'Let us begin,' ſaid Acelia, 'and the ground will aſſiſt us.' They did but little the firſt year, but ſufficient to give Melidor a fore-taſte of the pleaſure of creating.

The council, at Acelia's departure, received from her a ſmall recompence, and the good grace with which ſhe gave it, enhanced the value.

Melidor, on his return to town, was enchanted with his new houſe. It was commodious and pleaſing, furniſhed without pomp, but with taſte. 'This, my dear, is what ſuits us,' ſaid his wife. 'There is enough of it to be happy 'in it, if we are wiſe.' She had the pleaſure of ſeeing him grow dull at Paris, where he found himſelf confounded in the croud, and ſigh after

the country, where the desire of reigning recalled him.

They went down there before the return of spring, and the sages being assembled, they regulated the labours of the year.

From the Moment that Melidor saw the ground enlivened by his influence, and a multitude of people employed in fertilising it for him, he felt himself lifted above himself. A new farm, which he had established, was adjudged by the council, and Melidor had the sensible joy of seeing the first crop.

Their joy was renewed every day, on seeing those very fields, which two years before languished uncultivated, and unpeopled, covered with labourers and flocks, with wood, harvests, and herbages; and Melidor saw, with regret, the arrival of the season which recalled him to Paris.

Acelia could not resist the inclination of visiting the minister, who, in her misfortune, had stretched out his hand to her. She gave him so touching a picture of the happiness which they enjoyed, that he was moved to the bottom of his soul. 'You are,' said he to her, 'the model of women: may such an example make, on 'all hearts, the impression which it makes on 'mine. Go on, Madam, and depend on me. 'It is too much honour to be able to contribute 'to the happiness which you occasion.'

That fortunate country, to which our couple were recalled by the fine weather, became a smiling picture of œconomy and abundance. But a picture, still more touching, was that of the education which they gave to their children.

They talked in the neighbourhood of a couple like

like themſelves, withdrawn from the world, and who, in a pleaſing ſolitude, made it their delight to cultivate the tender fruits of their love. 'Let us go and ſee them,' ſaid Acelia, 'let us 'go and take leſſons from them.' On arriving, they ſaw the image of happineſs and of virtue, M. and Madam de Liſbé, in the midſt of their young family, ſolely occupied with the care of forming the underſtanding and the heart.

Acelia was touched at the grace, the decency, and, above all, with the air of gaiety which ſhe remarked in theſe children. They had neither the ruſtick baſhfulneſs, nor the indiſcreet familiarity of childhood. In their addreſs, their converſation, their language, nothing appeared but a natural excellence; ſo very eaſy had habit rendered all the movements which it had directed.

'This is not a viſit of ceremony,' ſaid Acelia to Madam de Liſbé: 'we come to take in-'ſtructions from you in the art of bringing up 'our children, and to entreat you to teach us 'the principles, and the method which you have 'followed with ſo much ſucceſs.'

'Alas, Madam, nothing is ſo plain, replied Madam de Liſbé. 'Our principles conſiſt in 'treating children as children, to make uſeful 'things a play to them; to make plain what we 'teach them, and to teach them only what they 'are able to conceive. Our method is equally 'ſimple: it conſiſts in leading them to inſtruc-'on by curioſity; in concealing from them, un-'der that allurement, the idea of labour and 'conſtraint, and in directing their very curioſi-'ty, by certain thoughts thrown in their way, 'and which we give them an inclination of ſeiſ-'ing. The moſt difficult is that of exciting

'emulation without jealouſy, and in that, 'perhaps, we have leſs merit than good for-'tune.'—'You have given them, without 'doubt, excellent maſters?'—No, Madam, we 'learnt whatever we wiſhed to teach them. See 'how the dove digeſts the nouriſhment of her 'young ones. Let us imitate her, and from 'thence reſult two advantages, and two plea-'ſures: that of inſtructing ourſelves, and that 'of inſtructing our children.'

'This little labour is ſo much the more amuſ-'ing,' ſaid Monſieur de Liſbé, 'as we have re-'ſerved all the abſtracted ſtudies for the age of 'reaſon, and as our leſſons are, at preſent, con-'fined to what falls beneath the ſenſes. Child-'hood is the age in which the imagination is 'moſt lively, and the memory moſt docile; it 'is to objects of theſe two organs that we ap-'ply the minds of our children. The ſurface of 'the ground is an image; the hiſtory of men, 'and that of nature, are a ſucceſſion of pictures; 'the natural philoſophy of tongues is only ſounds; 'the part of the mathematicks to be perceived 'by the ſenſes, is reduced to lines; all the arts 'may be deſcribed. Religion itſelf, and moral 'philoſophy, are better learnt by our feelings 'than they are conceived in idea; in a word, all 'our ſimple and primitive perceptions come to 'us by the ſenſes. Now, the ſenſes of children 'have more fineneſs, delicacy, and vivacity, 'than thoſe of maturer age. It is taking nature 'then in her ſtrength, to take her in childhood, 'to perceive and ſeiſe every thing which re-'quires not the combinations of the underſtand-'ing; beſides that the ſoul, free from all other 'care, is entirely at leiſure to attend to this;

'that

'that it is greedy of knowledge, exempt from 'prejudice, and that all the cells of the under- 'ſtanding and the memory of being empty, we 'range ideas there at pleaſure, eſpecially if, in 'the art of introducing them, we follow their 'natural order, if we are not in too much haſte 'to accumulate them, and if we give them lei- 'ſure to ſettle themſelves each in their place.'

'I ſee,' ſaid Acelia, 'but without terrifying 'myſelf at it, that all this demands a continued 'attention.' 'That attention,' replied Ma- dam de Liſbé, 'has nothing conſtraining nor 'painful. We live with our children, we have 'them under our eyes, we converſe with them, 'we accuſtom them to examine and to reflect, 'we aſſiſt them, without impatience, in deve- 'loping their ideas, we never diſcourage them 'by a tone of ill humour or contempt; ſeverity, 'which is only of ſervice to remedy the fault 'of negligence, has ſcarce ever place in an un- 'remitted education; and as we do not ſuffer 'nature to take any vicious bent, we are not ob- 'liged to put it under conſtraint.'

'Shall I not be indiſcreet,' ſaid Acelia to 'her, 'in teſtifying to you the deſire I have of 'being preſent at one of your leſſons?' Madam de Liſbé called her children, who were employ- ed together in a corner of the hall. They flew to the arms of their mother with a natural joy, at which Acelia was touched. 'Children,' ſaid the mother, 'the lady would willingly hear 'you: we are going to queſtion each other.'

Acelia admired the order and clearneſs of the knowledge which they had acquired; but ſhe was ſtill more enchanted at the grace and modeſ- ty with which they replied in their turns, at the

good underſtanding which reigned among them, and at the lively intereſt which they took at the ſucceſs of each other.

Acelia's object was to intereſt Melidor in this ſight, and he was moved even to tears. 'How happy are you,' ſaid he continually to Madam de Liſbé, 'how happy are you in having ſuch children! It is the ſweeteſt of all enjoyments.'

Acelia, on quitting her neighbours, requeſted their friendſhip; ſhe embraced a thouſand times their children, and prayed them to give her leave to come ſometimes to inſtruct herſelf by their ſtudies.

'What can be more aſtoniſhing, and more plain!' ſaid ſhe to Melidor, on going away. 'Can it be, that a pleaſure ſo pure is ſo little known; and that what is moſt natural ſhould be what is moſt uncommon? People have children and grow tired of them! and ſeek abroad for amuſements, when they have ſuch touching pleaſures at home!' 'True,' ſaid Melidor; 'all children are not ſo well endowed.' 'And who has told us,' replied Acelia, 'that heaven has not granted us the ſame favour? Ah, my dear, it is for the ſake of ſparing ourſelves, that we ſo often reproach nature. We generally blame her, in order to juſtify ourſelves. Before we have a right to think her incorrigible, we ſhould have done every thing to correct her. We are neither weak nor wicked; our children ought not to be ſo. Let us live with them, and for them; and I promiſe you that they will reſemble us.'

'You are going to have two aſſiſtants,' ſaid ſhe in the evening to the Abbé. 'We have juſt had

'had a foretaſte of the pleaſure of educating our 'children:' and ſhe related what they had ſeen and heard. 'We would follow the ſame plan,' added ſhe. 'You, my good Abbé, you ſhall 'teach them the languages; Melidor is going to 'apply himſelf to the ſtudy of the arts, and of 'nature, in order to be able to give leſſons on 'them. I reſerve to myſelf what is eaſieſt and moſt 'ſimple, the manners, the objects of ſentiment; 'and I hope, in a year, to be able to keep pace 'with you. You muſt ſhew us the ſources, and 'direct our ſtudies, ſtep by ſtep, on the ſhorteſt 'plan.'

The Abbé applauded this emulation, and each of them ſet about filling his taſk with an ardour, which, far from weakening itſelf, only redoubled.

Melidor found no further vacancy in the leiſure of the country. It ſeemed to him, as if time haſtened his courſe. The days were not long enough to attend to the cares of agriculture, and the ſtudies of the cloſet. One might have ſaid, that theſe employments ſtole from one another. Acelia was divided, in like manner, between the cares of her houſehold and the inſtruction of her children. Nature ſeconded her views. Her children, full of application and docile, whether by the example of their parents, or through a mutual emulation, made their little exerciſes their diverſion.

But this ſucceſs, ſatisfying as it was to the heart of a good mother, was not her moſt ſerious object. She had enſured to Melidor the only inexhauſtible reſourſe againſt the dullneſs of ſolitude, and the attraction of diſſipation. 'I am 'eaſy,' ſaid ſhe, 'at laſt,' when ſhe ſaw in

him a determined liking for ſtudy. 'It is a 'pleaſure which coſts little, which we find eve-'ry where, which never tires, and with which 'we are ſure of not being obliged to fly our-'ſelves.'

Melidor reſtored to himſelf, far from being aſhamed to confeſs that he owed his reformation to his wife, took a pride in relating all ſhe had done to reclaim him from his errors: he ceaſed not to commend the courage, the underſtanding, the ſweetneſs, the firmneſs, ſhe had mingled in it; and all the world, on hearing him, ſaid, 'This is a Wife of Ten Thouſand!'

Friendship put to the Test.

IN one of thoſe ſchools of morality to which the Engliſh youth go to ſtudy the duties of a man and a citizen, to enlighten the underſtanding and elevate the ſoul, Nelſon and Blanford were diſtinguiſhed by a friendſhip worthy of the firſt ages. As it was founded on a perfect agreement of ſentiments and principles, time only ſerved to confirm it; and the more it was enlightened every day, the more intimate it every day became. But this friendſhip was put to a teſt, which it had ſome difficulty to ſupport.

Their ſtudies being finiſhed, each of them took to that way of life, to which nature invited him. Blanford, active, robuſt, and courageous, determined for the profeſſion of arms, and for the ſea-ſervice. Voyages were his ſchool. Inured to fatigues, inſtructed by dangers, he arrived,

rived, from rank to rank, to the command of a veſſel.

Nelſon endowed with a manly eloquence, and of a genius wiſe and profound, was of the number of thoſe deputies, of whom the national ſenate is compoſed; and in a ſhort time he rendered himſelf famous there.

Thus each of them ſerved his country, happy in the good which he did it: while Blanford ſuſtained the ſhock of war, and of the elements, Nelſon ſtood proof againſt favour and ambition. Examples of an heroick zeal, one would have thought that, jealous of each other, they contended for virtue and glory, or rather that, at two extremities of the world, the ſame ſpirit animated them both.

'Courage,' ſaid Nelſon, in his letters to Blanford, 'does honour to friendſhip, by pre-
'ſerving its country: live for the one, if it be
'poſſible, and die for the other, if there be oc-
'caſion: a death, worthy of its tears, is more
'valuable than the longeſt life. 'Courage,' ſaid Blanford, in his letters to Nelſon, 'defends the
'rights of the people and of liberty: a ſmile
'from one's country is of more value than the
'favour of kings.'

Blanford enriched himſelf by doing his duty: he returned to London with the prizes he had taken on the Indian ſeas. But the moſt valuable part of his treaſure was a young Indian, of a beauty that would have been uncommon in any climate. A Bramin, to whom heaven had given this only daughter in reward for his virtues, had conſigned her up, in his dying moments, to the hands of the generous Engliſhman.

Coraly had not yet attained her fifteenth year; her

her father made her his delight, and the tenderest object of his cares. The village in which he dwelt was taken and pillaged by the Engliſh. Solinzeb (that was the Bramin's name) preſents himſelf on the threſhold of his habitation. 'Hold!' ſaid he to the ſoldiers, who were come quite up to his humble ſanctuary, 'hold! Whoever you be, the God of nature, the beneficent God, is yours and mine: reſpect in me his miniſter.'

Theſe words, the ſound of his voice, his venerable air, impreſs reſpect: but the fatal ſtroke is given, and the Bramin falls mortally wounded into the arms of his trembling daughter.

At that inſtant Blanford arrives. He comes to repreſs the fury of the ſoldiery. He cries out, he makes a paſſage through them, he ſees the Bramin leaning on a young girl ſcarce able to ſupport him, and who, tottering herſelf, bathes the old man with her tears. At this ſight nature, beauty, love, exerciſe all their influence on Blanford's ſoul. He eaſily diſcovers in Solinzeb, the father of her who embraces him with ſuch affectionate ſorrow.

'Barbarians, ſaid he to the ſoldiers, 'be gone! 'Is it feebleneſs and innocence, old age and 'childhood, that you ought to attack?' 'Mor-'tal, ſacred to me,' ſaid he to the Bramin, 'live, live, ſuffer me to repair the crime of 'thoſe ſavages.' At theſe words he takes him into his arms, makes him lie down, examines the wound, and procures him all the aſſiſtance of art. Coraly, witneſs to the piety, the ſenſibility of this ſtranger, thought ſhe ſaw a God deſcended from heaven to ſuccour and comfort her father.

Blanford,

Blanford, who did not quit Solinzeb, endeavoured to ſoften the ſorrow of his daughter; but ſhe ſeemed to have a preſage of her misfortune, and paſſed the nights and days in tears.

The Bramin perceiving his end to approach, 'I would fain,' ſaid he to Blanford, 'go and 'die on the border of the Ganges, and purify 'myſelf in its waves.' 'Father,' replied the young Engliſhman to him, 'it would be eaſy to 'give you that conſolation if all hope was loſt. 'But wherefore add to the peril in which you 'are, that of ſo painful a removal? It is ſo far 'from hence to the Ganges! And then (be not 'offended at my ſincerity) it is the purity of the 'heart which the God of nature requires; and 'if you have obſerved the law which he has engraven on our ſouls, if you have done mankind 'all the good that you have been able, if you 'have avoided doing them ill, the God who loves 'them will love you.'

'Thou art full of conſolation,' ſaid the Bramin 'but, thou, who reduceſt the duties of mankind 'to a plain piety, and purity of manners, how 'can it be that be that thou art at the head of 'thoſe robbers who ravage India, and who bathe 'themſelves in blood?'

'You have ſeen,' ſaid Blanford, 'whether I 'authoriſe thoſe ravages. Commerce draws us 'to India; and if men acted uprightly, that mutual exchange of conveniencies would be juſt 'and peaceable. The violence of your maſters 'obliged us to take arms; and the tranſition is 'ſo quick from defence to attack, that at the 'firſt ſucceſs, at the ſmalleſt advantage, the 'oppreſſed becomes the oppreſſor. War is a 'violent ſtate, which it is not eaſy to ſoften: 'Alas! when man becomes unnatural, how can 'he be juſt? It is my duty here to protect the

'com-

'commerce of the Engliſh, to make my country honoured and reſpected. In the diſcharge 'of this duty, I ſpare, as far as poſſible, the ef-'fuſion of blood and tears which war occaſions: 'happy if the death of a good man, the death 'of Coraly's father, be one of thoſe crimes and 'misfortunes which I am deſtined to ſave the 'world!' Thus ſpoke the virtuous Blanford, and embraced the old man.

'Thou wouldeſt perſuade me,' ſaid Solinzeb, 'that virtue is every where the ſame. But thou 'believeſt not in the God Viſtnou and his nine 'metamorphoſes: how can a good man refuſe 'his aſſent to them?' 'Father,' replyed the Engliſhman, 'there are millions of people upon 'the earth who have never heard either of Viſt-'nou, or his adventures; for whom however 'the ſun riſes every day, who breathe a pure 'air, who drink wholeſome waters, and to 'whom earth laviſhes the fruits of the ſeaſons. 'Would you believe it? There are among theſe 'people, as well as among the children of Brach-'ma, virtuous hearts, and good men. Equity, 'candour, uprightneſs, beneficence and piety 'are in veneration among them, and even among 'the wicked. O my father! The dreams of 'the imagination differ according to climates, 'but the mind is every where the ſame, and the 'light which is its ſource is as widely diffuſed as 'that of the ſun.'

'This ſtranger enlightens and aſtoniſhes me,' ſaid Solinzeb within himſelf: 'all that my heart, 'my reaſon, the inward voice of nature tell me 'to believe, he believes alſo; and of my wor-'ſhip he denies only that part which I have ſo 'much trouble myſelf not to deem abſurd.' 'Thou thinkeſt then,' ſaid he to Blanford, that 'a good man may die in peace?'—'Certainly.'

'—I think

'—I think ſo too, and I wait death as a gentle 'ſleep. But when I am gone, what will be-'come of my daughter? I ſee nothing in my 'country but ſlavery and deſolation. My daugh-'ter had only me in the world, and in a few 'moments I ſhall be no more.' 'Ah!' ſaid the young Engliſhman, 'if to her misfortune death 'deprives her of a father, deign to confide her 'to my cares. I call heaven to witneſs that her 'chaſtity, innocence and liberty ſhall be a de-'poſit guarded by honour, and for ever inviola-'ble.'—'And in what principles ſhall ſhe be 'brought up?'—'In yours, if you pleaſe; in 'mine if you will allow me; but at all events in 'that modeſty and virtue which are every where 'the glory of a woman.' 'Young man,' replied the Bramin with an auguſt and threatening air, 'God has juſt heard thy words; and the old 'man with whom thou now ſpeakeſt will per-'haps in an hour be with him.' 'You have 'no need,' ſaid Blanford to him, 'to make me 'perceive the ſacredneſs of my promiſes. I am 'but a feeble mortal; but nothing under hea-'ven is more immoveable than the honeſty of 'my heart.' He ſpoke theſe words with ſuch firmneſs, that the Bramin was penetrated with them. 'Come, Coraly,' ſaid he to his daugh-'ter, 'come, embrace thy dying father: let 'him be, after me, thy guide and thy ſupport.' 'There, my daughter,' added he, 'is the book 'of the law of thy fore-fathers, the *Veidam*: 'after having well meditated on it, ſuffer thy-'ſelf to be inſtructed in the creed of this virtu-'ous ſtranger, and chooſe that of the two forms 'of worſhip which ſhall ſeem to thee the moſt 'proper to make people virtuous.'

The night following the Bramin expired. His daughter, who filled the air with her cries, was

was not able to detach herſelf from that livid and cold corpſe, which ſhe watered with her tears. At laſt, ſorrow exhauſted her ſtrength, and the attendants availed themſelves of her fainting to carry her away from the melancholy place.

Blanford, whom his duty recalled from Aſia to Europe, carried thither with him his pupil; and though ſhe was beautiful and eaſy to ſeduce, though he was young and ſtrongly taken, he reſpected her innocence. During the voyage, he employed himſelf in teaching her a little Engliſh, in giving her an idea of the manners of Europe, and of diſengaging her docile mind from the prejudices of her country.

Nelſon was gone to meet his friend. They ſaw each other again with the moſt ſenſible joy. But the firſt ſight of Coraly ſtruck and afflicted Nelſon. 'What do you do with this girl?' ſaid he to Blanford in a ſevere tone. 'Is ſhe a cap-'tive, a ſlave? Have you carried her off from 'her parents? Have you made nature mourn?' Blanford related what had paſſed; he gave him ſo touching a portrait of the innocence, candour, and ſenſibility of the young Indian, that Nelſon himſelf was moved at it. 'This is my deſign,' continued Blanford; 'at my mother's, and un-'der her eyes ſhe ſhall be inſtructed in our man-'ners: I will form that ſimple and docile heart; 'and if ſhe can be happy with me, I will marry 'her.'——'I am eaſy, and acknowledge my 'friend.'

The ſurpriſes and different emotions of a young ſtranger, to whom every thing is new, have been often deſcribed; Coraly experienced them all. But her happy facility in ſeiſing, and comprehending every thing, even out-ſtripped the

the pains which they took to inſtruct her. Genius, talents, and the graces, were in her innate gifts: they had only the trouble of developing them by a ſlight culture. She was near ſixteen, and Blanford was going to marry her, when death deprived him of his mother. Coraly lamented her as if ſhe had been her own; and the pains which ſhe took to conſole Blanford, touched him ſenſibly. But during the mourning, which retarded the nuptials, he had orders to embark on a new expedition. He went to ſee Nelſon, and he confided to him, not the grief which he felt at quitting the young Indian; Nelſon would have made him bluſh at that; but the grief of leaving her to herſelf, in the midſt of a world which was unknown to her. 'If my mo-'ther,' ſaid he, 'were ſtill living, ſhe would 'be her guide; but the ill fortune which pur-'ſues this poor girl, has taken away from her 'her only ſupport.' 'Have you then forgot, ſaid Nelſon, 'that I have a ſiſter, and that my 'houſe is your own?'—'Ah Nelſon,' replied Blanford, fixing his eyes on his, 'if you knew 'what that charge is which you would have me 'confide to you!' At theſe words Nelſon ſmiled with diſdain. 'This uneaſineſs,' ſaid he, 'is a fine compliment to us both. 'You dare 'not truſt me with a woman!' Blanford, in confuſion, bluſhed. 'Pardon my weakneſs:' ſaid he, 'it made me ſee danger where thy vir-'tue finds none. I judged of your heart by my 'own; it is me whom my fear humbles. Let 'us ſay no more of it: I ſhall ſet out in peace, 'leaving the pledge of my love under the guard 'of friendſhip. But, my dear Nelſon, if I die, 'let me requeſt you to take my place.'—Yes,

'that

'that of father, I promiſe you: aſk no more.'—'Enough: nothing further detains me.'

The adieus of Coraly and Blanford were mingled with tears; but Coraly's tears were not thoſe of love. A lively gratitude, a reſpectful friendſhip were the tendereſt ſentiments which Blanford had inſpired her with. Her own ſenſibility was not known to her: the dangerous advantage of unfolding it was reſerved for Nelſon.

Blandford was handſomer than his friend; but his figure, like his temper, had a manly and auſtere fierceneſs in it. The ſentiments which he had conceived for his pupil ſeemed to have given him rather the diſpoſition of a father than of a lover: his attentions were without complaiſance, his goodneſs without charms, his concern tender, but ſolemn, and his deſire was that of rendering her happy with him rather than of being happy with her.

Nelſon, who was of a more engaging temper, had alſo more ſweetneſs in his features, and his language. His eyes eſpecially, his eyes expreſſed the eloquence of the ſoul. His look, the moſt touching in the world, ſeemed to penetrate to the bottom of people's hearts, and to procure him a ſecret correſpondence with them. His voice thunderedwhen there was a neceſſity to defend the intereſts of his country, her laws, her glory, her liberty, but in familiar converſation it was full of ſenſibility and charms. What rendered him ſtill more engaging, was an air of modeſty diffuſed over his whole perſon. This man, who at the head of his nation would have made a tyrant tremble, was, in company, of a timid baſhfulneſs: one ſingle word of commendation made him bluſh.

Lady

Lady Juliet Albury, his ſiſter, was a widow of great prudence, and an excellent heart; but of that kind of unhappy prudence which always anticipates misfortune, and accelerates inſtead of preventing it. It was ſhe who was charged with conſoling the young Indian. 'I have loſt my 'ſecond father,' ſaid that amiable girl to her. 'I 'have now only you and Nelſon in the world. 'I will love you, I will obey you. My life 'and heart are yours.' While ſhe was yet embracing Juliet, Nelſon arrives, and Coraly riſes with a ſmiling and heavenly countenance, but ſtill bedewed with tears.

'Well,' ſaid Nelſon to his ſiſter, 'have you 'conſoled her a little?' 'Yes, I am conſoled, 'I have no further complaint,' cried the young Indian, at the ſame time wiping her fine black eyes. Then making Nelſon ſeat himſelf by the ſide of Juliet, and falling on her knees before them, ſhe took them by their hands, put them one in the other, and preſſing them tenderly in her own, 'There is my mother,' ſaid ſhe to Nelſon, with a look which would have ſoftened marble; 'and you, Nelſon, what will you be 'to me?—'I, Madam? Your good friend.' —'*My good friend!* that is charming! then I 'ſhall be your good friend too? Give me only 'that name.'—'Yes, my good friend, my dear 'Coraly, your frankneſs delights me.' 'My 'God,' ſaid he to his ſiſter, 'what a beautiful 'girl! She will be the delight of your life.' 'Yes, if ſhe is not the miſery of yours,' replied the provident ſiſter. Nelſon ſmiled with diſdain. 'No,' ſaid he, 'love never diſputes in 'my ſoul the rights of ſacred friendſhip. Be 'eaſy, ſiſter, and employ yourſelf in peace, in

'the

'the care of cultivating this beautiful innocent. 'Blanford will be enchanted with her, if, at his 'return, ſhe is miſtreſs of our language. For 'we may perceive in her ideas, ſhadows of ſen- 'timent, which ſhe is unhappy at not being 'able to expreſs. Her eyes, her geſtures, her 'features, every thing about her proclaims in- 'genious thoughts, which only want words to 'call them forth. This, ſiſter, will be an amuſe- 'ment to you, and you will ſee her mind open 'like a flower.—' Yes, my brother, as a flow- 'er with a multitude of thorns.'

Lady Albury conſtantly gave Engliſh leſſons to her pupil, and the latter rendered them every day more intereſting, by intermingling with them ſtrokes of ſentiment of a vivacity and delicacy which belongs only to pure nature. It was a triumph to her but to make diſcovery of a word, which expreſſed any gentle affection of the ſoul. She made the moſt natural, the moſt touching applications of them: Nelſon arrived; ſhe flew to him, and repeated her leſſon to him with a joy, and ſimplicity, which yet he found only amuſing. Juliet alone ſaw the danger, and wanted to prevent it.

She began, by making Coraly underſtand that it was not polite to *thee* and *thou* it, and that ſhe ſhould ſay *you:* at leaſt unleſs it were a brother and a ſiſter. Coraly made her explain what politeneſs was, and aſked what it was good for, if brother and ſiſter had no need of it? They told her, that in the world it ſupplyed the place of good-humour. She concluded, that it was uſeleſs to thoſe who wiſhed well to each other. They added, that it diſplayed a deſire of obliging and of pleaſing. She replied, that this de-

ſire

ſire diſplayed itſelf without politeneſs: then giving for an example Juliet's little dog, which never quitted her, and careſſed her perpetually, ſhe aſked if he was polite. Juliet entrenched herſelf behind the punctilios of decorum which approved not, ſaid ſhe, the too free and joyous air of Coraly towards Nelſon; and the latter, who had the idea of jealouſy, becauſe nature gives us the ſenſation of it, imagined within herſelf that the ſiſter was jealous of the kindneſſes which her brother did her. 'No,' ſaid ſhe to her, 'I 'will afflict you no longer. I love you, I ſub-'mit, and I will ſay *you* to Nelſon.'

He was ſurpriſed at this change in Coraly's language, and complained of it to Juliet. 'The '*you*,' ſaid he, 'diſpleaſes me in her mouth: it 'agrees not with her ſimplicity.' 'It diſpleaſes 'me too,' replied the Indian: it has ſomething 'rebuffing and ſevere; whereas the *thou* is ſo 'ſoft! ſo intimate! ſo attracting!'——'Do 'you hear, ſiſter? She begins to underſtand the 'language.'—'Ha! it is not that which makes 'me uneaſy: with a ſoul like her's, we expreſs 'ourſelves but too well.' Explain to me,' ſaid Coraly to Nelſon, 'whence can ariſe the ridicu-'lous cuſtom of ſaying *you*, in ſpeaking to a ſin-'gle perſon.'—'It ariſes, child, from the pride 'and weakneſs of man: he perceives that he is 'inſignificant, being but one; he endeavours to 'double himſelf, to multiply himſelf in idea.'—'Yes, I comprehend that folly; but thou, 'Nelſon, thou art not vain enough...' Again!' interrupted Juliet with a ſevere tone.—'Hey! 'what, ſiſter, are you going to chide her!' 'Come, Coraly, come to me.'—I forbid her.' —'How cruel you are? Is ſhe in danger with me?

'me? Do you ſuſpect me of laying ſnares for 'her? Ah! leave her that pure nature; leave 'her the amiable candour of her country and 'age. Wherefore tarniſh in her that flower of 'innocence, more precious than virtue itſelf, 'and which our factitious manners have ſo much 'difficulty to ſupply? It ſeems to me that na-'ture is afflicted when the idea of evil penetrates 'into the ſoul. Alas! it is a venomous plant 'which grows wild, but too readily, without 'our giving ourſelves the trouble of ſowing it.' —'What you ſay is very fine to be ſure; but 'ſince evil exiſts, we muſt avoid it; and in or-'der to avoid it, we muſt know it.'—'Ah! my 'poor little Coraly,' ſaid Nelſon, 'into what a 'world art thou tranſplanted! What manners 'are thoſe, in which we are obliged to loſe one 'half of our innocence, in order to ſave the 'other!

In proportion as the moral ideas increaſed in the young Indian's mind, ſhe loſt her gaiety, and natural ingenuouſneſs. Every new inſtitution ſeemed to her a new fetter. 'Another duty!' ſaid ſhe. 'Another prohibition! My ſoul is en-'veloped as with a net, they are going ſoon to 'render it immoveable.' That they made a crime of what was hurtful, Coraly comprehend-ed without difficulty; but ſhe could not ima-gine any harm in what did no harm to any body. 'What greater happineſs in living together,' ſaid ſhe, 'than to ſee one another with plea-'ſure? and why conceal from ourſelves ſo ſweet 'an impreſſion? Is not pleaſure a bleſſing? 'Why then hide it from the perſon who occaſi-'ons it? They pretend to feel it with thoſe 'whom they do not love, and to feel none with

'thoſe

'thoſe whom they do! Some enemy of truth 'deviſed theſe manners.'

Reflexions of this ſort plunged her into melancholy; and when Juliet reproached her with it, 'you know the cauſe of it,' ſaid ſhe: 'every 'thing that is contrary to nature muſt make her 'ſorrowful, and in your manners every thing is 'contrary to nature.'

Coraly, in her little impatiences had ſomething ſo ſoft and touching, that lady Albury accuſed herſelf of afflicting her by too much rigour. Her manner of conſoling her, and of reſtoring to her her good humour, was by employing her in little ſervices, and by commanding her as her child. The pleaſure of thinking that ſhe was uſeful, flattered her ſenſibility: ſhe foreſaw the inſtant, in order to ſeiſe it; but the ſame attentions that ſhe paid to Juliet, ſhe wanted to pay to Nelſon, and they diſtreſſed her by moderating her zeal. 'The good offices of ſervitude,' ſaid ſhe, 'are low and vile, becauſe they are not 'voluntary; but from the moment that they are 'free, there is no longer ſhame, and friendſhip 'ennobles them. Fear not, my good friend, 'that I ſhall ſuffer myſelf to be abaſed. Though 'very young, before I quitted India, I knew 'the dignity of the tribe in which I was born; 'and when your fine ladies and young lords come 'to examine me with ſuch familiar curioſity, 'their diſdain only elevates my ſoul, and I perceive that I am well worth them all. But with 'you and Nelſon, who love me as your daughter, 'what can there be humiliating to me?'

Nelſon himſelf ſeemed ſometimes confuſed at the trouble ſhe took. 'You are very vain then,' ſaid ſhe to him, 'ſince you bluſh at having need

'of

'of me! I am not ſo proud as you: ſerve me;
'I ſhall be flattered with it.'

All theſe ſtrokes of an ingenuous and ſenſible ſoul, made lady Albury uneaſy. 'I tremble,' ſaid ſhe to Nelſon, when they were alone, 'I 'tremble, leſt ſhe love you, and leſt that love oc-'caſion her unhappineſs.' He took this hint for an injury to innocence. See there now,' ſaid he, 'how the abuſe of words alters and diſplaces 'ideas. Coraly loves me, I know it; but ſhe 'loves me as you do. Is there any thing more 'natural than to attach one's-ſelf to the perſon 'who does us good? Is it a fault in this girl, if 'the tender and lively expreſſion of a ſenti-'ment ſo juſt, and ſo laudable, is profaned in our 'manners? Whatever criminality we affix to 'it, has it ever come into her thought?'—'No, 'brother, you do not underſtand me. Nothing 'more innocent than her love for you; but...' —'But, ſiſter, why ſuppoſe, why want it to 'be love? It is true and pure friendſhip for me, 'which ſhe has for you likewiſe.'—'You per-'ſuade yourſelf, Nelſon, that it is the ſame 'ſentiment: will you make tryal of it? Let us 'have the appearance of ſeparating, and of re-'ducing her to the choice of quitting the one or 'the other'—'See there now: ſnares! wiles! 'Why impoſe them on her? Why teach her to 'diſſemble? Alas! does her ſoul practice diſ-'guiſe?'—'Yes, I begin to conſtrain her: ſhe 'is grown afraid of me, ever ſince ſhe has lov-'ed you.'——'And why have you inſpired her 'with that fear? You would have us be inge-'nuous, and you make it dangerous to be ſo: 'you recommended truth, and if it eſcape, you 'make it a reproach. Ah! Nature is not to

'blame:

'blame; ſhe would be frank if ſhe had liberty: 'it is the art which is employed to conſtrain 'her that gives her a bias to falſity.'—'Theſe 'are very grave reflexions for what is in fact a 'mere jeſt! For, after all, what does the whole 'amount to? To make Coraly uneaſy for a 'moment, in order to ſee to which ſide her 'heart will incline: that is all'—'That is all: 'but that is a falſity; and, which is worſe, an 'afflicting one.'—'Let us think no more of it: 'it anſwers no end to examine what we would 'not ſee.'——'I, ſiſter! I only want informa-'tion to know how to behave. The manner 'alone has diſpleaſed me; but no matter: what 'do you require of me?'—'Silence, and a ſe-'rious air. Coraly comes; now you ſhall 'hear.'

'What is the matter now,' ſaid Coraly, on coming up to them? 'Nelſon in one corner! 'Juliet in the other! Are you diſpleaſed?' 'We have juſt taken,' ſaid Juliet to her, 'a re-'ſolution which afflicts us; but there was a ne-'ceſſity of coming to it. We are no longer to 'live together; each of us is to have a houſe of 'their own; and we are agreed to leave you the 'choice.'

At theſe words, Coraly viewed Juliet with eyes immoveable, with ſorrow and aſtoniſh-ment. 'It is I,' ſaid ſhe, 'that am the cauſe 'of your wanting to quit Nelſon. You are 'diſpleaſed that he loves me; you are jealous of 'the pity which a young orphan inſpires him 'with. Alas! what will you not envy, if you 'envy pity; if you envy her who loves you, 'and who would give her life for you, the only 'valuable thing which is left her? You are un-

'juſt, my lady, yes, you are unjuſt. Your 'brother in loving me, loves not you leſs, and 'if it were poſſible he would love you more, for 'my ſentiments would paſs into his ſoul, and I 'have nothing to inſpire into him towards you 'but complaiſance and love.'

Juliet would fain have perſuaded her, that ſhe and Nelſon parted good friends. 'It is impoſ-'ſible,' ſaid ſhe. 'You made it your delight 'to live together. And ſince when is it become 'neceſſary that you ſhould have two houſes? 'People who love one another are never put to 'ſtraits; diſtance pleaſes only thoſe who hate 'each other.' 'You, O heaven! You to hate,' reſumed ſhe! 'And who will love, if two 'hearts, ſo good, ſo virtuous, do not. It is I, 'wretch as I am, that have brought trouble in-'to the houſe of peace. I will baniſh myſelf 'from it: yes, I beſeech you, ſend me back into 'my own country. I ſhall there find ſouls ſen-'ſible to my misfortune and to my tears, who 'will not make it a crime in me to inſpire a 'little pity.'

'You forget,' ſaid Juliet to her, 'that you 'are our charge. 'I am free,' replied the young Indian fiercely: 'I may diſpoſe of myſelf. 'What ſhould I do here? With whom ſhould I 'live? With what eyes would one of you 'regard me, after having deprived you of the 'other? Should I ſupply the place of a ſiſter to 'Nelſon? Should I conſole you for the loſs of a 'brother? To occaſion the unhappineſs of what 'alone I love! No, you ſhall not part: my 'arms ſhall be a chain to you.' Then running towards Nelſon, and ſeiſing him by the hand— 'Come,' ſaid ſhe to him, 'ſwear to your ſiſter,

'that

'that you love nothing in the world ſo well 'as her.' Nelſon, touched to the bottom of his ſoul, ſuffered himſelf to be led to his ſiſter's feet; and Coraly throwing herſelf on Juliet's neck, 'You,' continued ſhe, 'if you are my 'mother, pardon him for having loved your 'child: his heart has enough for us both, and 'if you are any loſer there, mine ſhall indemni-'fy you for it.' 'Ah! dangerous girl,' ſaid Juliet, 'what ſorrows will you ſoon occaſion us!' 'Ah, ſiſter,' cried Nelſon, who felt himſelf preſſed by Coraly againſt Juliet's boſom, 'have 'you the heart to afflict this poor girl!'

Coraly, enchanted at her triumph, kiſſed Juliet tenderly, at the very inſtant when Nelſon put his face to his ſiſter's. He felt his cheek touch the glowing cheek of Coraly, ſtill wet with tears. He was ſurpriſed at the confuſion and extaſy which this accident occaſioned him. 'Happily that,' ſaid he, is only a ſimple emo-'tion of the ſenſes: it goes not to the ſoul. I 'am myſelf, and I am ſure of myſelf.' He diſſembled, however, from his ſiſter, what he would fain have concealed from himſelf. He tenderly conſoled Coraly, in confeſſing to her that all they had juſt ſaid to her, to make her uneaſy, was nothing more than a jeſt. 'But what 'is no jeſt,' added he, 'is the counſel which I 'give you of diſtruſting, my dear Coraly, your 'own heart, which is too innocent, and too 'ſenſible. Nothing more charming than this 'affecting and tender diſpoſition, but the beſt 'things very often become dangerous by their 'exceſs.'

'Will you not quiet my uneaſineſs!' ſaid Coraly to Juliet, as ſoon as Nelſon was retired.

'Though you tell me ſo, it is not natural to 'make ſport of my ſorrow. There is ſomething 'ſerious in this paſtime. I ſee you deeply mov-'ed; Nelſon himſelf was ſeiſed with I know not 'what terror; I felt his hand tremble in mine; 'my eyes met his, and I ſaw there ſomething 'ſo tender, and ſo ſorrowful at the ſame time. 'He dreads my ſenſibility. He ſeems to be 'afraid that I ſhould deliver myſelf up to it. My 'good friend, would it be any harm to love?' —'Yes, child, ſince we muſt tell you ſo, it is 'a misfortune both for you and for him. A wo-'man, you may have ſeen it in the Indies as 'well as among us, a woman is deſtined for the 'ſociety of one man alone; and by that union 'ſolemniſed and ſacred, the pleaſure of loving 'becomes a duty to her.' 'I know it, ſaid Coraly ingenuouſly: 'that is what they call mar-'riage.'——'Yes, Coraly, and that friendſhip 'is laudable between two married perſons; but 'till then it is forbidden.'——'That is not rea-'ſonable,' ſaid the young Indian: 'for before 'uniting one to the other, we muſt know whe-'ther we love each other; and it is but in pro-'portion to our love before-hand, that we are 'ſure of loving afterwards. For example, if 'Nelſon loved me as I love him, it would be 'clear that each of us had met their counter-'part.'—'And do you not ſee in how many re-'ſpects, and by how many compacts, we are 'ſlaves; and that you are not deſtined for Nel-'ſon?' I underſtand you, ſaid Coraly, looking down; 'I am poor, and Nelſon is rich; but 'my ill fortune at leaſt does not forbid me to 'honour and cheriſh beneficent virtue. If a 'tree had ſentiment, it would pleaſe itſelf in

'ſeeing

'ſeeing the perſon who cultivates it repoſe him-
'ſelf under its ſhade, breathe the perfume of
'its flowers, and taſte the ſweetneſs of its fruits:
'I am that tree, cultivated by you two, and
'nature has given me a ſoul.'

Juliet ſmiled at the compariſon; but ſhe ſoon gave her to underſtand, that nothing would be leſs decent, than what to her ſeemed ſo juſt. Coraly heard her, and bluſhed; from that time, to her gaiety, to her natural ingenuouſneſs, ſucceeded an air the moſt reſerved, and a converſation the moſt timid. What hurt her moſt in our manners, though ſhe might have ſeen examples of it in India, was the exceſſive inequality of riches: but ſhe had not yet been humiliated by it: ſhe was ſo now for the firſt time.

'Madam,' ſaid ſhe, the next day, to Juliet, 'my life is ſpent in inſtructing myſelf in things 'which are rather ſuperfluous. An induſtry, 'which furniſhes bread, would be much more 'uſeful to me. It is a reſource, which I be-'ſeech you to be pleaſed to procure me.' 'You 'will never be reduced to that,' ſaid lady Albury, 'and, not to mention us, it is not for no-'thing that Blanford has aſſumed towards you 'the quality of father.' 'Favours,' replied Coraly, 'bind us much oftener than we would 'chooſe. It is not diſgraceful to receive them; 'but I clearly perceive that it is ſtill more re-'putable to do without them.' It was in vain that Juliet complained of this exceſs of delicacy: Coraly would not hear of amuſements, or of uſeleſs ſtudies. Amidſt the labours which ſuit feeble hands, ſhe choſe thoſe which required the moſt addreſs and underſtanding, and, on apply-

ing herſelf to them, her only anxiety was to know whether they afforded a ſubſiſtence. 'You 'will leave me then?' ſaid Juliet. 'I would 'put myſelf,' replied Coraly, 'above all wants, 'except that of loving you. I would have it in 'my power to rid you of me, if I am any ob-'ſtacle to your happineſs; but if I can contri-'bute to it, entertain no fear of my removing 'myſelf. I am uſeleſs, and yet I am dear to 'you; that diſintereſtedneſs is an example 'which I think myſelf worthy of imitating.'

Nelſon knew not what to think of Coraly's application to a labour merely mechanical, and of the diſguſt which had ſeized her, for matters of pure entertainment. He ſaw, with the ſame ſurpriſe, the modeſt ſimplicity which ſhe had aſſumed in her dreſs; he aſked her the reaſon. 'I am trying what it is to be poor,' replied ſhe, with a ſmile, and caſting her eyes downwards, bedewed them with her tears. Theſe words, and involuntary tears, touched him to the ſoul. 'O heaven!' ſaid he, 'Can my ſiſter have 'made her afraid of ſeeing herſelf poor and de-'ſolate!' As ſoon as he was alone with Juliet, he preſſed her to clear up the matter to him.

'Alas!' ſaid he, after having heard her, 'what cruel pains you take to poiſon her 'life and mine! Though you were leſs certain 'of her innocence, are you not perſuaded of my 'honour?'——'Ah, Nelſon! It is not the 'crime, it is the misfortune which terrifies me. 'You ſee with what dangerous ſecurity ſhe de-'livers herſelf up to the pleaſure of ſeeing you; 'how ſhe attaches herſelf inſenſibly to you; how 'nature leads her, without her knowledge, in-'to the ſnare. Ah, brother! at your age and

'hers,

'hers, the name of friendſhip is but a veil. And 'why can I not leave you both under the illuſi-'on! No, Nelſon, your duty is dearer to me 'than your eaſe. Coraly is deſtined for your 'friend; he himſelf has confided her to you; 'and, without intending it, you take her from 'him.'——'I, ſiſter! What is it you dare to 'warn me of?'——'Of what you ought to 'ſhun. I would have her, at the ſame time 'that ſhe loves you, conſent to give herſelf to 'Blanford; I would have him flatter himſelf 'with being loved by her, and be happy with 'her; but will ſhe be happy with him? Were 'you ſenſible only of pity, of which ſhe is ſo 'worthy, what ſorrow would you not feel at 'having troubled, perhaps for ever, the repoſe 'of this unfortunate young creature? But it 'would be a prodigy to ſee her conſume with 'love, and you do nothing more than pity her. 'You will love her... Will, do I ſay? Ah, 'Nelſon! Heaven grant that you do not alrea-'dy!'—Yes, ſiſter, it is time to take whatever 'reſolution you pleaſe. I only beg of you to 'ſpare the ſenſibility of that innocent ſoul, and 'not to afflict her too much.'——'Your ab-'ſence will afflict her without doubt; yet that 'alone can cure her. This is the time of the 'year, for the country; I was to follow you 'there, and to bring Coraly; do you go alone: 'we will remain at London. Write, however, 'to Blanford, that we have occaſion for his re-'turn.'

From the moment the Indian ſaw that Nelſon left her at London with Juliet, ſhe thought herſelf caſt into a deſert, and abandoned by all nature. But as ſhe had learned to be aſhamed,

and of courſe to diſſemble, ſhe pretended, as an excuſe for her ſorrow, the blame ſhe took to herſelf of having ſeparated them from each other. 'You were to have followed him,' ſaid ſhe to lady Albury; 'it is I that keep you here. Ah, 'wretch that I am! leave me alone, abandon 'me.' And in ſaying theſe words, ſhe wept bitterly. The more Juliet tried to divert her, the more ſhe increaſed her ſorrows. All the objects which ſurrounded her, ſerved only juſt to touch her ſenſes; one idea alone poſſeſſed her ſoul. There was a neceſſity for a kind of violence to draw her from it, but the inſtant they left her to herſelf, it ſeemed as if one ſaw her thought fly back again to the object which ſhe had been made to quit. If the name of Nelſon was pronounced before her, a deep bluſh overſpread her viſage, her boſom heaved, her lips trembled, her whole body was ſeiſed with a ſenſible ſhivering. Juliet ſurpriſed her in a walk, tracing out on the ſand, from place to place, the letters of that dear name. Nelſon's picture decorated Juliet's apartment; Coraly's eyes never failed to fix themſelves upon it, as ſoon as they were free: it was in vain ſhe wanted to turn them aſide; they ſoon returned there again, as it were of themſelves, and by one of thoſe emotions, in which the ſoul is accomplice, and not confidante. The gloomineſs into which ſhe was plunged, diſperſed at this ſight, her work fell out of her hands, and the utmoſt tenderneſs of ſorrow and love animated her beauty.

Lady Albury thought it her duty to remove this feeble image. This was to Coraly the moſt diſtreſsful misfortune. Her deſpair now broke all bounds. 'Cruel friend,' ſaid ſhe to Juliet,

'you

'you delight in afflicting me. You would have 'all my life be only ſorrow and bitterneſs. If 'any thing ſoftens my troubles, you cruelly 'take it from me. Not content to baniſh from 'me the man I love; his very ſhadow has too 'many charms for me, you envy me the plea-'ſure, the feeble pleaſure of ſeeing it.'—— 'Ah, unhappy girl! what would you?'—— 'Love, adore him, live for him, while he ſhall 'live for another. I hope nothing, I aſk no-'thing. My hands are ſufficient to enable me 'to live, my heart is ſufficient to enable me to 'love. I am troubleſome to you, perhaps odi-'ous; remove me from you, and leave me on-'ly that image wherein his ſoul breathes, or 'wherein I think at leaſt I ſee it breathe. I will 'ſee it. I will ſpeak to it, I will perſuade my-'ſelf that it ſees my tears flow, that it hears my 'ſighs, and that it is touched by them.'——— 'And wherefore, my dear Coraly, nouriſh this 'cruel flame, which devours you? I afflict you; 'but it is for your good, and Nelſon's peace. 'Would you render him unhappy? He will be 'ſo, if he knows that you love him; and ſtill 'more ſo if he loves you. You are not in a 'condition to hear my reaſons; but this incli-'nation, which you think ſo ſweet, would be 'the poiſon of his life. Have pity, my dear 'child, of your friend, and my brother: ſpare 'him the remorſe, the complaints, which would 'bring him to his grave.' Coraly trembled at this diſcourſe. She preſſed lady Albury to tell her how Nelſon's love for her could be ſo fatal to him. 'To explain myſelf farther,' ſaid Ju-liet, 'would be to render odious to you, what 'you ought for ever to cheriſh. But the moſt

'ſacred of all duties forbids him the hope of be-
'ing yours.'

How is it poſſible to expreſs the diſtreſs into which Coraly's ſoul was plunged? 'What man-
'ners, what a country, ſaid ſhe, 'wherein one
'cannot diſpoſe of one's ſelf; wherein the firſt
'of all bleſſings, mutual love, is a terrible evil!
'I muſt tremble then at ſeeing Nelſon again!
'I muſt tremble at pleaſing him! At pleaſing
'him! alas! I would give my life to be one
'moment, in his eyes, as amiable as he is in
'mine. Let me baniſh myſelf from this fatal
'ſhore, where it is made a misfortune to be
'loved.'

Coraly heard every day, of veſſels ſailing for her country. She reſolved to embark, without taking leave of Juliet. Only one evening, on going to bed, Juliet perceived that, in kiſſing her hand, her lips preſſed her more tenderly than uſual, and that ſome profound ſighs eſcaped her. 'She leaves me more moved than ever before,' ſaid Juliet, alarmed. 'Her eyes are fixed on
'mine, with the moſt lively expreſſion of ten-
'derneſs and ſorrow. What paſſes in her ſoul?' This uneaſineſs diſturbed her the whole night, and the next morning ſhe ſent to know if Coraly was not yet up. They told her that ſhe was gone out, alone, and in a very plain dreſs, and that ſhe had taken the way to the water-ſide. Lady Albury gets up in diſtreſs, and orders them to go in purſuit of the Indian. They find her on board a veſſel, begging her paſſage, environed by ſailors, whom her beauty, her graces, her youth, the ſound of her voice, and, above all, the native ſimplicity of her requeſt, raviſhed with ſurpriſe and admiration. She had nothing

with

with her, but bare neceſſaries. Every thing they had given her which was valuable, ſhe had left behind, excepting a little heart of chryſtal, which ſhe had received from Nelſon.

At the name of lady Albury, ſhe ſubmitted without reſiſtance, and ſuffered herſelf to be reconveyed home. She appeared before her a little confuſed at her elopement; but to her reproaches ſhe anſwered, that ſhe was unhappy and free.——'What, my dear Coraly! do you 'ſee nothing here but unhappineſs?' 'If I ſaw 'here only my own,' ſaid ſhe, 'I ſhould never 'leave you. It is Nelſon's unhappineſs that 'frights me, and it is for his peace that I would 'fly.'

Juliet knew not what to reply: ſhe durſt not talk to her of the rights which Blanford had acquired over her: this would have been to make her hate him, as the cauſe of her unhappineſs. She choſe rather to leſſen her fears. 'I could 'not conceal from you,' ſaid ſhe to her, 'all 'the danger of a fruitleſs love; but the evil is 'not without remedy. Six months of abſence, 'reaſon, friendſhip, how can we tell? Another 'object perhaps...' The Indian interrupted her. 'Say death: there is my only remedy. 'What! Will reaſon cure me of loving the moſt 'accompliſhed, the moſt worthy of men! Will 'ſix months of abſence give me a ſoul that loves 'him not! Does time change nature? Friendſhip 'will pity me: but will it cure me? Another 'object!... You do not think ſo. You do 'not do me that injuſtice. There are not two 'Nelſons in the world; but though there were 'a thouſand, I have but one heart; that is gi-'ven away. It is, you ſay, a fatal gift: that I

do

'do not comprehend; but if it be ſo, ſuffer me 'to baniſh myſelf from Nelſon, to hide from 'him my perſon and my tears. He is not in-'ſenſible, he would be moved at it; and if it 'be a misfortune to him to love me, pity might 'lead him to it. Alas! who can, with indiffe-'rence, ſee himſelf cheriſhed as a father, rever-'ed as a god! Who can ſee himſelf loved, as I 'love him, and not love in his turn?' 'You 'will not expoſe him to that danger,' replied Juliet; 'you will conceal your weakneſs from 'him, and you will triumph over it. No, Co-'raly, it is not the ſtrength that is wanting to 'you, but the courage of virtue.'—'Alas! I 'have courage againſt misfortune; but is there 'any againſt love? And what virtue would you 'have me oppoſe to him? They all act in con-'cert with him. No, my Lady, you talk to 'no purpoſe: you throw clouds over my un-'derſtanding; you ſhed not the leaſt light on 'it. Let me ſee and hear Nelſon: he ſhall de-'cide upon my life.'

Lady Albury, in the moſt cruel perplexity, ſeeing the unhappy Coraly withering and pining in tears, and begging to be ſuffered to depart; reſolved to write to Nelſon, that he might come and diſſuade the poor girl from her deſign of returning to India, and preſerve her from that diſguſt of life which daily conſumed her. But Nelſon himſelf was not leſs to be pitied. Scarce had he quitted Coraly, but he perceived the danger of ſeeing her, by the repugnance which he had to leave her. All that had appeared only play to him with her, became ſerious, on being deprived of her. In the ſilence of ſolitude, he had interrogated his ſoul: he had found there

friendſhip

friendſhip languiſhing, zeal for the publick good weakened, nay almoſt extinguiſhed, and love alone ruling there, with that ſweet and terrible ſway which he exerciſes over good hearts. He perceived, with horrour, that his very reaſon had ſuffered itſelf to be ſeduced. The rights of Blanford were no longer ſo ſacred; and the involuntary crime of depriving him of Coraly's heart, was at leaſt very excuſable; after all, the Indian was free, and Blanford himſelf would not have wiſhed to impoſe it on her as a duty to be his. 'Ah, wretch!' cried Nelſon, terrified at theſe ideas; 'whither does a blind paſſion lead 'me aſtray! The poiſon of vice gains upon me: 'my heart is already corrupted. Is it for me to 'examine whether the charge, which is com-'mitted to me, belong to the perſon who com-'mits it? And am I made the judge, to whom 'it belongs, when I have promiſed to keep it? 'The Indian is free; but am I ſo? Should I 'doubt the rights of Blanford, if it were not in 'order to uſurp them? My crime was, at firſt, 'involuntary; but it is no longer ſo, the mo-'ment I conſent to it: I! juſtify perjury! I! 'think a faithleſs friend excuſable! Who would 'have told thee, Nelſon, who would have told 'thee, that on embracing the virtuous Blan-'ford, thou ſhouldeſt call in doubt, whether it 'were permitted thee to raviſh from him the 'woman who is to be his wife, and whom he 'delivered up to thy truſt? To what a degree 'does love debaſe a man! And what a ſtrange 'revolution its intoxication makes in a heart! 'Ah! let him rend mine, if he will; he ſhall 'not make it either perfidious or baſe; and if 'my reaſon abandon me, my conſcience at leaſt

'ſhall

'ſhall not betray me. Its light is incorrupti-
'ble: the cloud of paſſions cannot obſcure it:
'there is my guide; and friendſhip, honour,
'and fidelity, have ſtill ſome ſupport.'

In the mean time Coraly's image purſued him perpetually. If he had only ſeen her with all her charms, arrayed in ſimple beauty, bearing in her countenance the ſerenity of innocence, the ſmile of candour on her lips, the fire of deſire in her eyes, and in all the graces of her perſon the attracting air of voluptuouſneſs, he would have found in his principles, in the ſeverity of his manners, ſufficient force to withſtand ſeduction; but he thought he ſaw that amiable girl as ſenſible as himſelf, more feeble, with no other defence than a prudence which was not her own, innocently abandoning herſelf to an inclination which would be her unhappineſs; and the pity which ſhe inſpired him with, ſerved as fuel to his love. Nelſon blamed himſelf for loving Coraly, but forgave himſelf for pitying her. Senſible of the evils which he was on the point of being the cauſe of, he could not paint to himſelf her tears, without thinking of the fine eyes which were to ſhed them, and the heaving boſom which they would bedew: thus the reſolution of forgetting her, rendered her ſtill dearer to him. He attached himſelf to her by renouncing her: but in proportion as he perceived himſelf weaker, he became more courageous. 'Let me give over,' ſaid he, the thoughts
'of a cure: I exhauſt myſelf in fruitleſs ef-
'forts. It is a fit which I muſt ſuffer to go off.
'I burn, I languiſh, I die; but all that is mere
'ſuffering, and I am anſwerable to nobody but
'myſelf for what paſſes within. Provided no-
'thing

'thing eſcape me from without, that diſcovers 'my paſſion, my friend has no reaſon to com-'plain. It is only a misfortune to be weak; and 'I have the courage to be unhappy.'

It was in this reſolution of dying, rather than betraying his friendſhip, that he received the letter from his ſiſter. He read it with an emotion, and an ecſtaſy that was inexpreſſible. 'O, 'ſweet and tender victim,' ſaid he, 'thou 'groaneſt, thou wouldeſt ſacrifice thyſelf to my 'repoſe, and to my duty! Pardon! Heaven is 'my witneſs, that I feel, more ſtrongly than 'thyſelf, all the pangs which I occaſion thee. 'Oh, may my friend, thy huſband, ſoon arrive, 'and wipe away thy precious tears! He will 'love thee as I love thee; he will make his own 'happineſs thine. However, I muſt ſee her, 'in order to detain and conſole her. Why 'ſhould I ſee her! To what do I expoſe my-'ſelf! Her touching graces, her ſorrow, her 'love, her tears which I occaſion to flow, and 'which it would be ſo ſweet to dry up, thoſe 'ſighs which a heart ſimple and artleſs ſuffers to 'eſcape, that language of nature, in which a 'ſoul the moſt ſenſible pains itſelf with ſo much 'candour: what trials to ſupport! What will 'become of me? And what can I ſay to her? 'No matter: I muſt ſee her, and talk to her, as 'a friend and a father. After ſeeing her, I only 'ſhall be the more uneaſy, the more unhappy 'for it; but it is not my own peace that is in 'queſtion; it is hers: and above all, the hap-'pineſs of a friend depends on it. A friend for 'whom ſhe muſt live. I am certain of ſubduing 'myſelf; and how painful ſo ever the conteſt 'may be, it would be a weakneſs and ſhame to 'avoid it.'

At

At Nelſon's arrival, Coraly, trembling and confuſed, ſcarce dared preſent herſelf to him. She had wiſhed his return with ardour, and, at ſeeing him, a mortal chilneſs glided through her veins. She appeared, as it were, before a judge who was preparing, with one ſingle word, to decide her fate.

What were Nelſon's feelings, on ſeeing the roſes of youth faded on her beautiful cheeks, and the fire of her eyes almoſt extinguiſhed! 'Come,' ſaid Juliet to her brother, 'appeaſe 'the mind of this poor girl, and cure her of her 'melancholy. She is eaten up with the vapours 'with me: ſhe wants to return to India.'

Nelſon, ſpeaking to her in a friendly manner, wanted to engage her, by gentle reproaches, to explain herſelf before his ſiſter; but Coraly kept ſilence; and Juliet, perceiving that ſhe was a reſtraint upon her, went away.

'What is the matter with you, Coraly? 'What have we done to you?' ſaid Nelſon. 'What ſorrow preſſes you?'——'Do not you 'know it? Muſt you not have ſeen that my joy 'and my ſorrow can no longer have more than 'one cauſe? Cruel friend, I live only through 'you; and you fly me: you would have me 'die!... But you would not have it ſo; they 'make you do it: they do more, they require 'of me to renounce you, and to forget you. 'They fright me, they damp my very ſoul, and 'they oblige you to make me diſtracted. I aſk 'of you but one favour,' continued ſhe, throwing herſelf at his knees, 'it is to tell me whom 'I offend in loving you, what duty I betray, 'and what evil I occaſion. Are there here laws 'ſo cruel, are there tyrants ſo rigorous, as to

'forbid

'forbid me the moſt worthy uſe of my heart and 'my reaſon? Muſt we love nothing in the world? 'or, if I may love, can I make a better choice?'

'My dear Coraly, replied Nelſon, 'nothing is 'truer, nothing is more tender than the friend-'ſhip which attaches me to you. It would be 'impoſſible, it would be even unjuſt that you 'ſhould not be ſenſible of it.'—'Ah! I revive: 'this is talking reaſon.'—'But though it would 'be extremely agreeable to me to be what you 'hold deareſt in the world, it is what I cannot 'pretend, neither ought I even to conſent to it.' —'Alas! now I don't underſtand you.'——— 'When my friend confided you to my care, 'he was dear to you?'——'He is ſo ſtill.'—— 'You would have thought yourſelf happy to be 'his?'—'I believe it.'—'You loved nothing 'ſo much as him in the world?'——'I did not 'know you.'——'Blanford, your deliverer, the 'depoſitary of your innocence, in loving you 'has a right to be loved.'—'His favours are al-'ways preſent to me: I cheriſh him as a ſecond 'father:'——'Very well, know that he has 'reſolved to unite you to him, by a tie ſtill more 'ſweet and ſacred than that of his favours. He 'has confided to me the half of himſelf, and at 'his return he aſpires only to the happineſs of 'being your huſband.' 'Ah!' ſaid Coraly, comforted, 'this then is the obſtacle which ſe-'parates us? Be eaſy, it is removed.'—'How?' —'Never, never, I ſwear to you, will Coraly 'be the wife of Blanford.'—'It muſt be ſo.'— 'Impoſſible; Blanford himſelf will confeſs it.'— 'What! He who received you from the hand 'of a dying father, and who himſelf has acted as 'a father to you!'—'Under that ſacred title I

'revere

'revere Blanford; but let it not require more.'—'You have then reſolved his unhappineſs?'—'I have reſolved to deceive nobody. If I were given to Blanford, and Nelſon demanded my life of me, I would lay down my life for Nelſon; I ſhould be perjured to Blanford.'——'What ſay you?'—'What I will dare to tell Blanford himſelf. And why ſhould I diſſemble it? Does love depend on myſelf?'—'Ah, how culpable you make me!'—'You! In what? In being amiable in my eyes? Ay, heaven diſpoſes of us. Heaven has given to Nelſon thoſe graces, thoſe virtues which charm me: heaven has given to me this ſoul, which it has made expreſsly for Nelſon. If they knew how full it is of him, how impoſſible that it ſhould love any thing but you, any thing like you!... Let them never talk to me of living, if it be not for you that I live.'—And this is what diſtreſſes me. With what reproaches has not my friend a right to overwhelm me?'—'He! of what can he complain? What has he loſt? What have you taken from him? I love Blanford as a tender father; I love Nelſon as myſelf, and more than myſelf: theſe ſentiments are not incompatible. If Blanford delivered me into your hands as a depoſit which was his own, it is not you, it is he that is unjuſt.'—'Alas! it is me, who oblige you to reclaim from him that treaſure of which I rob him: it would be his if it were not mine; and the keeper becomes the purloiner.'——'No, my friend, be equitable. I was my own, I am yours. I alone could give myſelf away, and have given myſelf to you. By attributing to friendſhip rights which it has not, it is you that uſurp them in its behalf, and you render

'yourſelf

'yourſelf an accomplice of the violence which 'they do me.'—'He, my friend! do you vio-'lence?'—'What ſignifies it to me whether 'he does it himſelf, or that you do it for him? 'Am I treated the leſs like a ſlave? One ſingle 'intereſt occupies and touches you; but if ano-'ther than your friend wanted to retain me cap-'tive, far from ſubſcribing to it, would you not 'make it your glory to ſet me free? It is then 'only for the ſake of friendſhip that you betray 'nature! What do I ſay? Nature! and Love, 'Nelſon, Love, has not that alſo its rights? 'Is there not ſome law among you in favour of 'ſenſible ſouls? Is it juſt and generous to over-'whelm, to drive to deſpair a fond female, and 'to treat without pity a heart, whoſe only crime 'is loving you?'

Sobs interrupted her voice; and Nelſon, who ſaw her choaked with them, had not even time to call his ſiſter. He haſtens to untie the rib-bands which bound her boſom; and then all the charms of youth in its flower were unveiled to the eyes of this paſſionate lover. The terror with which he was ſeiſed, rendered him at firſt inſenſible of them; but when the Indian reſum-ing her ſpirits, and perceiving herſelf preſſed in his arms, thrilled with love and tranſport, and when on opening her fine languiſhing eyes, ſhe ſought the eyes of Nelſon; 'heavenly powers,' ſaid he, 'ſupport me! all my virtue abandons 'me. Live, my dear Coraly.'—'Would you 'that I ſhould live, Nelſon! would you then 'that I love you?'—'No, I ſhould be perjur-'ed to friendſhip, I ſhould be unworthy to ſee 'the light; unworthy of ſeeing my friend again. 'Alas! he foretold me this, and I vouchſafed

'not

'to believe him. I have preſumed too much 'on my own heart. Have pity of it, Coraly, of 'that heart which you rend to pieces. Suffer 'me to fly you and to ſubdue myſelf.' 'Ah! 'you would have my death,' ſaid ſhe to him falling into a fit at his feet. Nelſon, who thinks he ſees what he loves expiring, ruſhes to embrace her, and reſtraining himſelf ſuddenly at the ſight of Juliet, 'my ſiſter,' ſaid he, 'aſſiſt her: it is 'for me to die.' On ſaying theſe words he withdraws.

'Where is he,' demanded Coraly, on opening her eyes? 'What have I done to him? 'Why fly me? And you, Juliet, more cruel 'ſtill, why recall me to life?' Her ſorrow redoubled, when ſhe learned that Nelſon was juſt gone; but reflection gave her a little hope and courage. The concern and tenderneſs which Nelſon had not been able to conceal, the terror with which ſhe had ſeen him ſeiſed, the tender words which had eſcaped him, and the violence which it was to him to ſubdue himſelf and withdraw, all perſuaded her that ſhe was beloved. 'If it be true,' ſaid ſhe, 'I am happy. Blan-'ford will return, I will confeſs the whole to 'him; he is too juſt and too generous to want 'to tyranniſe over me.' But this illuſion was ſoon diſſipated

Nelſon received in the country a letter from his friend, announcing his return. 'I hope,' ſaid he, at the end of his letter, 'to ſee my-'ſelf, in three days, united to all that I love. 'Pardon, my friend, if I aſſociate to thee in my 'heart the amiable and tender Coraly. My ſoul 'was a long time ſolely devoted to thee, now 'ſhe partakes of it. I have confided to thee the

'ſweeteſt

'ſweeteſt of my wiſhes, and I have ſeen friend-
'ſhip applaud love. I form my happineſs, both
'of one and the other; I make it my felicity to
'think that by thy cares, and thoſe of thy ſiſter,
'I ſhall ſee my dear pupil again, her mind orna-
'mented with new acquirements, her ſoul en-
'riched with new virtues, more amiable if poſ-
'ſible and more diſpoſed to love. It will be the
'pureſt bliſs to me to poſſeſs her as a benefit
'conferred by you.'

'Read this letter,' writ Nelſon to his ſiſter,
'and make Coraly read it. What a leſſon for
'me! What a reproach to her!'

'It is over,' ſaid Coraly after having read, 'I
'ſhall never be Nelſon's; but let him not aſk
'me to be another's. The liberty of loving is
'a good which I am not able to renounce.' This reſolution ſupported her; and Nelſon in his ſolitude was much more unhappy than ſhe.

'By what fatality,' ſaid ſhe, 'is it, that
'what forms the charm of nature and the de-
'light of all hearts, the happineſs of being
'loved, forms my torment? What ſay I? Of
'being loved? That is nothing; but to be lov-
'ed of what I love! To touch on happineſs!
'To have only to deliver myſelf up to it!...
'Ah! all that I am able to do, is to fly: invi-
'olable and ſacred friendſhip aſks no more. In
'what a condition have I ſeen this poor girl! In
'what a condition did I abandon her! She may
'well ſay, that ſhe is the ſlave of my virtues. I
'ſacrifice her as a victim, and I am generous at
'her expence. There are then virtues which
'wound nature; and to be honeſt, one is ſome-
'times obliged to be unjuſt and cruel! O, my
'friend! mayeſt thou gather the fruit of the ef-

'forts

'forts which it coſt me, enjoy the good which 'I reſign to thee, and live happy from my mis-'fortune. Yes, I wiſh that ſhe may love thee; 'I wiſh it, heaven is my witneſs; and the moſt 'ſenſible of all my pains is that of doubting the 'ſucceſs of my wiſhes.'

It was impoſſible for nature to ſupport herſelf in a ſtate ſo violent. Nelſon, after long ſtruggles, ſought repoſe; alas! there was no more repoſe for him. His conſtancy was at laſt exhauſted, and his diſcouraged ſoul fell into a mortal languor. The weakneſs of his reaſon, the inefficacy of his virtue, the image of a painful and ſorrowful life, the void and the ſtate of annihilation, into which his ſoul would fall, if it ceaſed to love Coraly, the evils without intermiſſion which he was to ſuffer, if he continued to love her, and, above all, the terrifying idea of ſeeing, of envying, of hating, perhaps, a rival in his faithful friend, all rendered his life a torment to him, all urged him to ſhorten the courſe of it. Motives more ſtrong reſtrained him. It was not a part of Nelſon's principles that a man, a citizen, might diſpoſe of himſelf. He made it a law to himſelf to live, conſoled in his miſery if he could ſtill be uſeful to the world, but conſumed with heavineſs and ſorrow, and become as it were inſenſible to every thing.

The time appointed for Blanford's return approached. It was neceſſary that every thing ſhould be ſo diſpoſed as to conceal from him the miſchief which his abſence had occaſioned; and who ſhould determine Coraly to conceal it, but Nelſon? He returned therefore to London; but languiſhing, dejected, to ſuch a degree as not to be known. The ſight of him overwhelmed Juliet

liet with grief, and what impreſſion did it not make on the ſoul of Coraly! Nelſon took upon him to re-encourage them; but that very effort only ſerved to complete his own dejection. The ſlow fever which conſumed him redoubled; he was forced to give way to it; and this furniſhed occaſion for a new conteſt between his ſiſter and the young Indian. The latter would not quit Nelſon's pillow. She urgently entreated them to accept of her care and attendance. They kept her out of the way from pity to herſelf, and for the ſake of ſparing him; but ſhe taſted not the repoſe which they meant to procure her. Every moment of the night they found her wandering round the apartment of the diſeaſed, or motionleſs on the threſhold of his door, with tears in her eyes, her ſoul on her lips, her ear attentive to the ſlighteſt noiſes, every one of which congealed her with fear.

Nelſon perceived that his ſiſter ſuffered her to ſee him with regret. 'Afflict her not,' ſaid he to her; 'it is to no purpoſe: ſeverity is no 'longer neceſſary. It is by gentleneſs and pati-'ence that we muſt endeavour at our cure.' 'Coraly, my good friend,' ſaid he to her one day when they were alone with Juliet, 'you 'would readily give ſomething to reſtore my 'health, would not you?'—'O heaven! I would 'give my life.'—'You can cure me at leaſt. 'Our prejudices are, perhaps, unjuſt, and our 'principles inhuman; but the honeſt man is a 'ſlave to them. I have been Blanford's friend 'from my infancy. He depends on me as on 'himſelf, and the chagrin of taking from him a 'heart of which he has made me the keeper, is 'every day digging my grave. You may ſee

'whether

'whether I exaggerate. I do not conceal from 'you the ſource of the ſlow poiſon which con- 'ſumes me. You alone can dry it up. I re- 'quire it not: you ſhall be ſtill free; but there 'is no other remedy for my diſeaſe. Blanford 'arrives. If he perceives your diſinclination for 'him, if you refuſe him that hand which but 'for me would have been granted him, be aſ- 'ſured that I ſhall not ſurvive his misfortune 'and my own remorſe. Our embraces will be 'our adieus. Conſult yourſelf, my dear child, 'and if you would that I live, reconcile me with 'myſelf, juſtify me towards my friend.'—— 'Ah! live, and diſpoſe of me,' ſaid Coraly to him, forgetting herſelf; and theſe words, diſ- treſſing to love, bore joy to the boſom of friend- ſhip.

'But,' reſumed the Indian after a long ſilence, 'how can I give myſelf to him whom I do not 'love, with a heart full of him whom I do love?' '—My dear, in an honeſt ſoul, duty triumphs 'over every thing. By loſing the hope of be- 'ing mine, you will ſoon loſe the thought. It 'will give you ſome pain without doubt, but 'my life depends on it, and you will have the 'conſolation of having ſaved it'—'That is eve- 'ry thing to me: I give myſelf up at that price. 'Sacrifice your victim: it will groan, but it 'will obey. But you, Nelſon, you, who are 'truth itſelf, would you have me diſguiſe my 'inclinations, and impoſe thus on your friend? 'will you inſtruct me in the art of diſſembling? '—No, Coraly, diſſimulation is uſeleſs. I have 'not had the misfortune of extinguiſhing in you 'gratitude, eſteem, and tender friendſhip; theſe 'ſentiments are due to your benefactor, and 'they are ſufficient for your huſband: only

'diſplay

'diſplay theſe towards him. As to that incli-
'nation which leans not towards him, you owe
'him the ſacrifice of it, but not the confeſſion.
'That which would hurt, if it were known,
'ought to remain for ever concealed; and dan-
'gerous truth has ſilence for its refuge.'

Juliet interrupted this ſcene, too painful to both, by leading away Coraly, whom ſhe employed every endearment and commendation to conſole. 'It is thus,' ſaid the young Indian with a ſmile of ſorrow, 'that on the Ganges 'they flatter the grief of a widow, who is go-'ing to devote herſelf to the flames of her huſ-'band's funeral pile. They adorn her, they 'crown her with flowers, they ſtupefy her with 'ſongs of praiſe. Alas! her ſacrifice is ſoon finiſh-'ed; mine will be more cruel and laſting. My 'good friend; I am not eighteen years of age! 'What tears have I yet to ſhed till the moment 'when my eyes ſhall ſhut themſelves for ever!' This melancholy idea painted to Juliet a ſoul abſorbed in ſorrow. She employed herſelf no longer in conſoling her, but in grieving along with her. Complaiſance, perſuaſion, indulgent and feeling compaſſion, all that friendſhip has moſt delicate, was put in practice, to no effect.

At laſt, they inform her that Blanford is landed; and Nelſon, enfeebled and faint as he is, goes to receive and embrace him at the harbour. Blandford on ſeeing him, could not conceal his aſtoniſhment and his uneaſineſs. 'Courage, 'man,' ſaid Nelſon;' 'I have been very ill; 'but my health is returning. I ſee you again, 'and joy is a balm which will ſoon revive me. I 'am not the only one whoſe health has ſuffered 'by your abſence. Your pupil is a little chang-'ed: the air of our climate may contribute to

'it. As to the reſt, ſhe has made a great pro-
'greſs: her underſtanding, her talents have un-
'folded themſelves, and if the kind of languor
'into which ſhe is fallen vaniſhes, you will poſ-
'ſeſs what is pretty uncommon, a woman, in
'whom nature has left nothing wanting.'

Blanford, therefore, was not ſurpriſed to find Coraly weak and languiſhing; but he was much affected at it. 'It ſeems,' ſaid he, 'as if hea-
'ven wanted to moderate my joy, and to puniſh
'me for the impatience which my duty excited
'in me at a diſtance from you. I am now here
'again free and reſtored to love and friendſhip.' The word *love* made Coraly tremble: Blanford perceived her concern. 'My friend,' ſaid he to her, 'ought to have prepared you for the
'confeſſion which you have juſt heared.'——
'Yes, your goodneſs is well known to me; but
'can I approve the exceſs of it?'—'That is a
'language which ſavours of the politeneſs of
'Europe: join with me to forget it. Frank and
'tender Coraly, I have ſeen the time when if I
'had ſaid, ſhall Hymen unite us? you would
'have anſwered me without diſguiſe. 'With
'all my heart,' or poſſibly, 'I cannot conſent
'to it;' uſe the ſame freedom now.—I love
'you, Coraly, but I love to make you happy:
'your misfortune would be mine.' Nelſon, trembling, looked at Coraly, and durſt not gueſs her anſwer. 'I heſitate,' ſaid ſhe, to Blandford,
'through a fear like yours. While I ſaw you
'only as a friend, a ſecond father, I ſaid to my-
'ſelf, he will be content with my veneration
'and affectionate regard; but if the name of
'huſband mingle with titles already ſacred, what
'have you not a right to expect? Have I where-
'with to acquit me towards you?'—'Ah! that
'amiable

'amiable modeſty is worthy of adorning thy 'virtues. Yes, thou half of myſelf, your du-'ties are fulfilled, if you return my affection. 'Thy image has followed me every where. My 'ſoul flew back towards thee acroſs the depths 'which ſeparated us: I have taught the name of 'Coraly to the echoes of another world.' 'Ma-'dam,' ſaid he to Juliet, 'pardon me, if I envy 'you the happineſs of poſſeſſing her. It will 'ſoon be my turn to watch over a health which 'is ſo precious to me. I will leave you the care 'of Nelſon's: it is a charge not leſs dear to 'me. Let us live happy, my friends: it is you 'who have made me know the value of life; 'and, in expoſing it, I have often experienced 'by what ſtrong ties I was attached to you.'

It was ſettled that in leſs than a week Coraly ſhould be married to Blanford. In the mean time, ſhe remained with Juliet, and Nelſon ne-ver quitted her. But his courage was exhauſted in ſupporting the young Indian's. To be perpe-tually conſtrained to ſuppreſs his own tears, to dry up thoſe of a fond girl, who ſometimes diſ-treſſed at his feet, ſometimes fainting and falling into his arms, conjured him to have pity on her, without allowing one moment to his own weak-neſs, and without ceaſing to recall to his mind his cruel reſolution, this trial appears above the ſtrength of nature: accordingly Nelſon's virtue abandoned him every moment. 'Leave me,' ſaid he to her, 'unhappy girl! I am not a tiger; 'I have a feeling ſoul, and you diſtract it. Diſ-'poſe of yourſelf, diſpoſe of my life; but leave 'me to die faithful to my friend.'—'And can 'I, at the hazard of your life, uſe my own 'will? Ah! Nelſon, at leaſt promiſe me to

'live; no longer for me, but for a ſiſter who 'adores you.'—'I ſhould deceive you, Coraly. 'Not that I would make any attempt upon my-'ſelf; but ſee the condition to which my 'grief has reduced me; ſee the effect of my 'remorſe and ſhame anticipated; ſhall I be the 'leſs odious, leſs inexorable to myſelf, when 'the crime ſhall be accompliſhed?'——'Alas! 'you talk of a crime! Is it not one then to ty-'ranniſe over me?'—'You are free; I no 'longer require any thing; I know not even 'what are your duties; but I know too well 'my own, and I will not betray them.'

It was thus that their private converſation ſerved only to diſtreſs them. But Blanford's preſence was ſtill more painful to them. He came every day to converſe with them, not on the barren topicks of love, but the care he took, that every thing in his houſe ſhould breathe chearfulneſs and eaſe, that every thing there ſhould foreſtall the deſires of his wife, and contribute to her happineſs. 'If I die, without 'children,' ſaid he, 'the half of my wealth is 'her's, the other half is his who, after me, ſhall 'know how to pleaſe and conſole her for having 'loſt me. That, Nelſon, is your place; there 'is no growing old in my profeſſion: take my 'place when I ſhall be no more. I have not the 'odious pride of wanting my wife to continue 'faithful to my ſhade. Coraly is formed to 'embelliſh the world, and to enrich nature 'with the fruits of her fecundity.'

It is more eaſy to conceive than deſcribe the ſituation of our two lovers. Their concern and confuſion were the ſame in both; but it was a kind of conſolation to Nelſon, to ſee Coraly in ſuch

ſuch worthy hands, whereas Blanford favour's, and love were an additional torment to her. On loſing Nelſon, ſhe would have preferred the deſertion of all nature, to the cares, the favours, the love of all the world beſide. It was decided, however, even with the conſent of this unfortunate girl, that there was no longer time to heſitate, and that it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould ſubmit to her fate.

She was led then as a victim to that houſe, which ſhe had cheriſhed as her firſt aſylum, but which ſhe now dreaded as her grave. Blanford received her there as ſovereign; and what ſhe could not conceal of the violent ſtate of her ſoul, he attributes to timidity, to the concern which, at her age, the approach of marriage inſpires.

Nelſon had ſummoned up all the ſtrength of a ſtoical ſoul, in order to preſent himſelf at this feſtival with a ſerene countenance.

They read the ſettlement which Blanford had made. It was, from one end to the other, a monument of love, eſteem, and beneficence. Tears flowed from every eye, even from Coraly's.

Blanford approaches reſpectfully, and ſtretching out his hand to her, 'Come,' ſaid he, 'my 'beſt-beloved, give to this pledge of your fideli-'ty, to this title of the happineſs of my life, 'the inviolable ſanctity with which it is to be 'clothed.'

Coraly, on doing herſelf the utmoſt violence, had ſcarce ſtrength to advance, and put her hand to the pen. At the inſtant ſhe would have ſigned, her eyes were covered with a miſt; her whole body was ſeiſed with a ſudden trembling; her knees bent under her, and ſhe was on the

point of falling, if Blanford had not ſupported her. Shocked, congealed with fear, he looks at Nelſon, and ſees him with the paleneſs of death on his countenance. Lady Albury had ran up to Coraly, in order to aſſiſt her: 'O, 'heaven,' cries Blanford, what is it that I ſee! 'Sorrow, death ſurround me. What was I go-'ing to do? What have you concealed from 'me? Ah! my friend, could it be poſſible! 'See the light again, my dear Coraly, I am not 'cruel, I am not unjuſt; I wiſh only for your 'happineſs.'

The women who ſurrounded Coraly, exerted themſelves to revive her; and decency obliged Nelſon and Blanford to keep at a diſtance. But Nelſon remained immoveable, with his eyes fixed on the ground, like a criminal. Blanford comes up to him, and claſps him in his arms. 'Am I no longer thy friend?' ſaid he; 'art 'thou not ſtill the half of myſelf? Open thy 'heart to me, and tell me what has paſſed '.... No, tell me nothing: I know all. This 'poor girl could not ſee thee, hear thee, and 'live with thee, without loving thee. She has 'ſenſibility, ſhe has been touched with thy 'goodneſs, and thy virtues. Thou has con-'demned her to ſilence, thou has required of 'her the moſt grievous ſacrifice. Ah, Nelſon! 'had it been accompliſhed, what a misfortune! 'Juſt heaven would not permit it; nature, to 'whom thou didſt violence, has reſumed her 'rights. Do not afflict thyſelf: it is a crime which 'ſhe has ſpared thee. Yes, the devotion of Cora-'ly was the crime of friendſhip.' 'I confeſs it,' replied Nelſon, throwing himſelf at his knees: 'I have been the innocent cauſe of thy unhap-

'pineſs,

'pineſs, of my own, and that of this amiable 'girl; but I call fidelity, friendſhip, honour, 'to witneſs....'—'No oaths,' interrupted Blanford: 'they wrong us both.' 'Go, my 'friend,' continued he, raiſing him, 'thou 'wouldeſt not be in my arms, if I had been able 'to ſuſpect thee of a ſhameful perfidy. What 'I foreſaw is come to paſs, but without thy 'conſent. What I have juſt now ſeen is a proof 'of it, and that very proof is unneceſſary: thy 'friend has no need of it.' 'It is certain, repli-'ed Nelſon, 'that I have nothing to reproach 'myſelf, but my preſumption and imprudence. 'But that is enough, and I ſhall be puniſhed 'for it. Coraly will not be thine, but I will 'not be her's.'—'Is it thus that you anſwer a 'generous friend?' replied Blanford to him, in 'a firm and grave tone of voice. 'Do you 'think yourſelf obliged to obſerve childiſh punc-'tilios with me? Coraly ſhall not be mine, be-'cauſe ſhe would not be happy with me. But 'an honeſt man for a huſband, whom but for 'you ſhe would have loved, is a loſs to her, of 'which you are the cauſe; and which you muſt 'repair. The contract is drawn up, they ſhall 'change the names; but I inſiſt that the arti-'cles remain. What I meant to give Coraly as 'a huſband, I now give her as a father. Nel-'ſon, make me not bluſh by an humiliating re-'fuſal.'—'I am confounded, and not ſurpriſed,' ſaid Nelſon, 'at this generoſity which over-'powers me. I muſt ſubſcribe to it with con-'fuſion, and revere it in ſilence. If I knew not 'how well reſpect reconciles itſelf to friendſhip, 'I ſhould no longer dare to call you my friend.' During this converſation Coraly had recovered,

and again ſaw with terror the light which was reſtored to her. But what was her ſurpriſe, and the revolution which was ſuddenly wrought in her ſoul! 'All is known, all is forgiven,' ſaid Nelſon, embracing her, 'fall at the feet of our 'benefactor: from his hand I receive your's.' Coraly would have been profuſe in her acknowledgments; 'you are a child,' ſaid Blanford to her: 'You ſhould have told me every thing. 'Let us talk no more of it; but let us never 'forget that there are trials, to which virtue it-'ſelf would do well not to expoſe herſelf.'

THE MISANTHROPE CORRECTED.

THERE is no correcting the natural diſpoſition, they will tell me, and I agree to it; but among a thouſand combined accidents which compoſe a character, what eye is ſufficiently fine, to diſtinguiſh that indelible characteriſtick? How many vices and irregularities are attributed to nature, which ſhe never occaſioned? Such is, in man, the hatred of mankind: it is a factitious character; a part which we take up out of whim, and maintain through habit; but in acting which, the ſoul is under reſtraint, from which ſhe ſtruggles to be delivered. What happened to the Miſanthrope, whom Moliere has painted, is an inſtance of it; and we are now going to ſee how he was brought to himſelf again.

Alceſtes diſſatisfied, as you know with his miſtreſs, and his judges, deteſting the city and the court, and reſolved to fly mankind, retired very far from Paris, into the Voges, near Laval,

val, on the banks of the Vologne. This river, whoſe ſhells contain the pearl, is ſtill more valuable, on account of the fertility which it communicates to its borders. The valley which it borders is a beautiful meadow. On one ſide ariſe ſmiling hills, interſperſed with woods and hamlets; on the other extend, in a plain, vaſt fields covered with corn. Thither Alceſtes retired, to live forgotten by all nature. Free from cares and duties, wholly reſigned to himſelf, and at length delivered from the hateful ſight of the world, he praiſed heaven for having broken all his connections. A little ſtudy, much exerciſe, the leſs lively but tranquil pleaſures of a gentle vegetation, in one word, a life peaceably active preſerved him from the dullneſs of ſolitude: he deſired, he regretted nothing.

One of the pleaſures of his retreat was to ſee around him the earth, cultivated and fertile, nouriſh a people who ſeemed to be happy. A Miſanthrope, who is ſuch from virtue, thinks that he hates men, only becauſe he loves them. Alceſtes felt an emotion mingled with joy, at the ſight of his fellow-creatures, rich by the labour of their own hands. 'Theſe people,' ſaid he, 'are very happy in being yet half ſavages; 'they would ſoon be corrupted if they were 'more civiliſed.'

Walking in the fields, he accoſts a labourer, ploughing and ſinging. 'God preſerve you, 'good man,' ſaid he to him: 'you are very 'merry!' 'According to cuſtom,' replied the 'villager.—'I am very glad of it: it proves 'that you are content with your condition.'— 'And well I may.'—'are you married?'—— 'Yes, thank heaven.'—'Have you any chil-

'dren?'—'I had five; I have loſt one; but 'that loſs may be repaired.'—'Is your wife 'young?'—'Twenty-five.'—'Is ſhe hand-'ſome?'—'She is ſo to me; but ſhe is better 'than handſome, ſhe is good.'—'And you love 'her?'—'Love her! who would not love her?' —'She loves you too, without doubt?'—'O, 'as to that, moſt heartily, as well as before 'marriage.'—'You loved one another then be-'fore marriage?'—'Or elſe ſhould we have 'taken each other?'—'And your children, do 'they come on well?'—'Ah, that is a plea-'ſure. The eldeſt is but five; he has more 'wit than his father already. And my two girls! 'they are charming. It would be a very great 'pity if they ſhould want huſbands! The 'youngeſt boy ſucks ſtill; but the little rogue 'will be a ſturdy fellow. Would you believe it? 'He beats his ſiſters, when they go to kiſs their 'mother. He is afraid that they are coming to 'take the breaſt from him.'—'All this is very 'happy?'—'Happy? I think ſo. You ſhould 'ſee our joy, when I return from work. You 'would think they had not ſeen me for a year: 'I know not which to liſten to. My wife hangs 'upon my neck, my daughters jump into my 'arms, my eldeſt boy ſeiſes me by the legs, not 'one of them, even to little Jacky himſelf, who 'rolling on his mother's bed, ſtretches out his 'little hands to me; while I laugh, and cry, and 'kiſs them; for all this moves me.'—'I believe 'it.'—'You ought to feel it, for to be ſure you 'are a father.'—'I have not that happineſs.'— 'So much the worſe: there is no other joy.'— 'And how do you live?'—'Very well; upon 'excellent bread, good milk, and the fruits of

'our

'our orchard. My wife, with a little bacon, 'makes a ſupper of cabbage, of which the king 'himſelf might eat. Then we have the eggs of 'our fowls; and on Sundays we regale our-'ſelves, and drink a cup of wine.'—'Yes, but 'when the year turns out bad?'—'We are 'prepared for it, and live comfortably on what 'we have ſaved in a good one.'—'Ay, but the 'rigour of the weather, the cold, the rain, the 'heats!'—'We are accuſtomed to them; and 'if you knew what pleaſure we have in coming 'in the evening to breathe the freſh air, after a 'ſummer's day; or, in winter, to unnumb 'one's hands at a fire of good bruſh-wood, be-'tween one's wife and one's children! And 'then we ſup heartily, and go to ſleep; and do 'you think that we ever beſtow a thought upon 'the bad weather? Sometimes my wife ſays to 'me: My good man, do you hear the wind and 'the ſtorm? Ah, if you were now in the fields! '—I am not there, I am with thee, I tell her; 'and in order to aſſure her of it, I preſs her 'againſt my boſom. Ah, Sir, there are a great 'many of the fine people who do not live ſo 'happy as we.'—'And the taxes?'—'We 'pay them chearfully: it muſt be ſo. All the 'country cannot be noble. The lord of the 'manor, and the judge, cannot come to labour. 'They ſupply our wants, we ſupply theirs; and 'every ſtate of life, as it is ſaid, has its trou-'bles.'—'What equity?' ſaid the Miſanthrope. 'There now, in two words, is the whole œco-'nomy of primitive ſociety. O Nature! there 'is nothing juſt but thee: it is in thy uncultí-'vated ſimplicity that we find ſound reaſon. But 'in paying the tribute ſo well, do not you give

'room

'room to be charged more heavily?'—'We uſed to fear it formerly; but, thank God, the lord of the manor has freed us from that uneaſineſs. He performs the duty of our good king: he impoſes, he receives himſelf, and in caſes of neceſſity he makes the advances. He takes care of us, as if we were his children.'—'And who is this galant man?'---'The Viſcount de Laval. He is well enough known: the whole country reſpects him.'—'Does he reſide in his caſtle?'—'He paſſes eight months of the year there.'—'And the reſt?'—'At Paris, I believe.'—'Does he ſee company?'—The townſmen of Bruyers, and ſometimes our old folks, who go to eat his ſoup, and to chatter with him.'—'And does he bring any body from Paris?'—'No body but his daughter.'—'He is very much in the right. And how does he employ himſelf?'—'In judging us, reconciling us, marrying our children, maintaining peace in our families, and aſſiſting them when the ſeaſons are bad.' 'I will go, ſaid Alceſtes, to ſee his village: it muſt be moving.'

He was ſurpriſed to find the roads, even the croſs-roads, bordered with hedges, and kept with care; but having met people buſied in keeping them even, 'Ah,' ſaid he, 'there are the ſtatute-labourers.' 'Statute-labourers!' replied an old man, who preſided over theſe works, 'we know none ſuch here: theſe people are paid: no body is conſtrained. Only, if there come to the village a vagabond, an idle fellow, I am ſent to him; and if he wants bread, he earns it, or he goes to ſeek it elſewhere.'—'And who has eſtabliſhed this happy

'py policy?'—'Our good lord, the father to 'us all.'——'And the funds for this expenſe, 'who provides them?'—'The community; 'and as ſhe impoſes them herſelf, it comes not 'to paſs, as is ſeen elſewhere, that the rich are 'exempted at the charge of the poor.'

Alceſtes redoubled his eſteem for the wiſe and beneficent man who governed this little people. 'How powerful would a king be,' ſaid he, 'and 'a ſtate how happy, if all the great proprietors 'of lands would follow the example of this no-'bleman! But Paris abſorbs both the wealth 'and the men: it ſtrips, it carries away every 'thing.'

The firſt glance of the village preſented him with the image of eaſe and health. He enters into a plain and large building, which was to appearance a publick edifice, and there he finds a multitude of children, women, and old men, employed in uſeful labours. Idleneſs was not permitted, excepting to the laſt weakneſs. Infancy, almoſt at its iſſuing from the cradle, acquired the habit and reliſh of labour, and old age, at the brink of the grave, ſtill exerciſed its trembling hands. The ſeaſon in which the earth reſts, aſſembled to the workhouſe the vigorous men; and then the ſhuttle, the ſaw, and the hatchet, gave a new value to the productions of nature. 'I am not ſurpriſed,' ſaid Alceſtes, 'that theſe 'people ſhould be exempt from vice and want. 'They are laborious and perpetually employ-'ed.' He enquired how the work-houſe had been eſtabliſhed. 'Our good lord,' ſaid they to him, 'advanced the money. It was but a ſmall 'matter at firſt, and all was done at his riſk, at 'his expence, and his profit; but after being

'well

'well aſſured it was advantageous, he gave up 'the undertaking to us: he interferes no longer, 'except in protecting it; and every year he 'gives to the village the tools of ſome one 'of our arts: it is the preſent he makes at the 'firſt wedding that is celebrated in the year.' 'I 'muſt ſee this man,' ſaid Alceſtes; 'his cha-'racter pleaſes me.'

He advances into the village, and he obſerves a houſe into which the people are going and coming with uneaſineſs. He demands the cauſe of theſe movements, they tell him the head of the family is at the point of death. He enters, and ſees an old man, who, with an expiring, but ſerene eye, ſeems to bid adieu to his children, who melt into tears around him. He diſtinguiſhes, in the midſt of the croud, a perſon moved, but leſs afflicted, who encourages and conſoles them. By his plain and grave dreſs, he takes him for the phyſician of the village. 'Sir,' ſaid he to him, 'be not ſurpriſed at ſeeing here a 'ſtranger. It is not an idle curioſity that brings 'me hither. Theſe good people may have need 'of aſſiſtance at ſo melancholy a juncture; and 'I come...' 'Sir,' ſaid the Viſcount to him, 'my peaſants thank you; I hope, as long as I 'live, they will have need of nobody; and 'if money could prolong the days of a good man, 'this worthy father of a family ſhould be reſtor-'ed to his children.' Ah, Sir,' ſaid Alceſtes, on diſcovering Monſieur de Laval by this talk, 'par-'don an uneaſineſs which I ought not to have 'had.' 'I am not offended,' replied M. de 'Laval, 'that a good deed ſhould be diſputed 'with me; but may I know who you are, and 'what brings you here?' At the name of Alceſ-

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tes he recollected that cenſor of human nature whoſe rigour was ſo well known; but, without being intimidated, 'Sir,' ſaid he, 'I am very 'glad to have you in my neighbourhood, and if 'I can be of ſervice to you in any thing, I beg 'you to command me.'

Alceſtes went to viſit M. de Laval, and was received by him with that plain and ſerious gentility which proclaims neither the want, nor deſire of being connected. 'There now,' ſaid he, 'is a man of ſome reſerve. I like him the bet-'ter for it.' He felicitated M. de Laval on the pleaſures of his ſolitude. 'You come to live 'here,' ſaid he, 'far from mankind, and you 'are very much in the right to fly from them!' '—I, Sir! I do not fly from mankind. I have 'neither the weakneſs to fear them, the pride to 'deſpiſe them, nor the misfortune to hate 'them.' This anſwer came ſo home, that Alceſtes was diſconcerted at it. But he would ſupport what he ſet out with, and he began the ſatyr of the world. 'I have lived in the world, 'as well as others,' ſaid M. de Laval, 'and I 'have not found it ſo wicked. There are vices 'and virtues in it, good and evil, I confeſs: but 'nature is ſo compounded, we muſt know how 'to accommodate ourſelves to it.' 'Ay, but,' ſaid Alceſtes, 'in that compound the good is ſo 'very ſmall, and the evil ſo predominant, that 'the latter choaks up the former.' 'Ah, Sir,' replied the Viſcount, 'if we were as ſtrongly 'fired with the good as with the evil, if we uſed 'the ſame warmth in publiſhing it, and good 'examples were poſted up as bad ones are, can 'you doubt but the good ones would carry it on 'the balance? But gratitude ſpeaks ſo low, and

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'complaint declaims ſo loud, that we only hear 'the latter. Eſteem and friendſhip are com-'monly moderate in their commendations: they 'intimate the modeſty of the virtuous in praiſ-'ing them; whereas, reſentment and injury 'exaggerate every thing to exceſs. Thus we 'ſee not the good, but through a medium 'which leſſens it, and we view the evil through 'a vapour which magnifies it.'

'Sir,' ſaid Alceſtes to the Viſcount, 'you 'make me wiſh to think like you; and though 'I might have on my ſide the melancholy truth, 'your miſtake would be preferable.'—'Why, 'yes, without doubt: fretfulneſs is of no ſer-'vice. A fine part for a man to play, to be 'out of humour like a child, and get into a 'corner to pout at all the world; and why? 'for the bickerings of the circle in which we 'live: as if all nature were an accomplice and 'reſponſible for the injuries at which we are 'hurt!'—'You are right,' ſaid Alceſtes: 'it 'would be unjuſt to render man a ſolitary ani-'mal; but how many griefs have we not to re-'proach them with in common? Believe me, 'Sir, my prejudice has ſerious and weighty mo-'tives. You will do me juſtice, when you know 'me. Permit me to ſee you often.' 'Often, 'that is difficult,' ſaid the Viſcount: 'my time 'is very much taken up; and my daughter and 'I have our ſtudies, which leave us little leiſure; 'but ſometimes, if you pleaſe, we will enjoy 'our neighbourhood, at our eaſe, and without 'laying any conſtraint on each other: for the 'privilege of the country is to have it in our 'power to be alone when we have a mind.'

'This man is rare in his ſpecies,' ſaid Alceſ-

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'tes on going away. 'And his daughter who 'liſtened to us with the air of ſo tender a vene-'ration for her father: this daughter, brought 'up under his eyes, accuſtomed to a plain life, 'pure manners and pleaſures that are innocent, 'will be an eſtimable woman, or I am very 'much miſtaken; at leaſt, reſumed he, unleſs 'they lead her aſtray in that Paris, where every 'thing is ruined.'

If we were to preſent to ourſelves delicacy and ſentiment perſonified, we ſhould have the idea of Urſula's beauty. (It was thus that Mademoiſelle de Laval was called.) Her figure was ſuch as imagination gives to the youngeſt of the graces. She was eighteen years complete, and by the freſhneſs and regularity of her charms, one might ſee that nature had juſt put the laſt hand to her. When unmoved, the lilies of her complection prevailed over the roſes; but on the ſlighteſt emotion of her ſoul, the roſes effaced the lilies. It was little to have the colouring of flowers, her ſkin had alſo that fineneſs, and that down ſo ſoft, ſo velvet-like, which nothing has yet tarniſhed. But it was in the features of Urſula's countenance that a thouſand charms varied perpetually, diſplayed themſelves ſucceſſively. In her eyes, ſometimes a modeſt languor, a timid ſenſibility ſeemed to iſſue from her ſoul, and to expreſs itſelf by her looks; ſometimes a noble ſeverity, and commanding with ſweetneſs, moderated the touching luſtre of it; and we ſaw there reigning by turns ſevere decency, fearful modeſty, and lively and tender voluptuouſneſs. Her voice and mouth were of that kind which embelliſh every thing; her lips could not move without diſcovering new attrac-

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tions; and when ſhe condeſcended to ſmile, her very ſilence was ingenious. Nothing more ſimple than her attire, and nothing more elegant. In the country ſhe let grow her hair, which was of a pale white, of the ſofteſt tint, and ringlets, which art could not hold captive, floated around her ivory neck, and waved down upon her beautiful boſom. The Miſanthrope had found in her the genteeleſt air, and the moſt decent converſation. 'It would be a pity,' ſaid he, 'that ſhe 'ſhould fall into bad hands: ſhe might make 'an accompliſhed woman. Indeed, the more 'I think of it the more I congratulate myſelf in 'having her father for a neighbour: he is an 'upright man, a galant man: I do not believe 'that he has a very right way of thinking; but 'he has an excellent heart.'

Some days after, M. de Laval in walking out returned his viſit; and Alceſtes talked to him of the pleaſure which he muſt have in making people happy. 'It is a fine example,' added he, 'and to the ſhame of mankind a pretty rare 'one! How many folks, richer and more 'powerful than you, are only a burthen to the 'people!' 'I neither excuſe them, nor blame 'them,' replied M. de Laval. 'To do good, 'there muſt be the power; and when we can, 'we ought to know how to ſeiſe it. But think 'not that it is ſo eaſy to effect it. It is not ſufficient to be dexterous enough; we muſt be 'alſo happy enough; we muſt know how to 'treat juſt, ſenſible, docile minds; and frequently a great deal of addreſs and patience is 'neceſſary to lead on a people, naturally diffident and fearful, to what is advantageous to 'them. Truely,' ſaid Alceſtes, 'it is the ex-

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'cuſe which they make; but do you think it a 'very ſolid one? And the obſtacles which you 'have overcome, cannot they alſo conquer 'them?' I have been,' ſaid M. de Laval, 'ſol-'licited by opportunity, and ſeconded by cir-'cumſtances. This people, newly conquered, 'thought themſelves undone without reſource, 'and the moment that I held open my arms to 'them, their deſpair made them ruſh into them. 'At the mercy of an arbitrary impoſt, they had 'conceived ſo much terror, that they choſe ra-'ther to endure their vexations than to ſhow a 'little eaſe. The expences of the levy aggra-'vated the impoſt; theſe good people were 'over-rated; and poverty was the aſylum into 'which diſcouragement had thrown them. On 'my arrival here I found eſtabliſhed, this diſ-'treſſing and deſtructive maxim to the country: '*The more we labour, the more we ſhall be* '*trampled upon.* The men durſt not be labo-'rious, the women trembled at becoming fruit-'ful. I went back to the ſource of the evil. I 'addreſſed myſelf to the man appointed to col-'lect the tribute.' 'Sir,' ſaid I to him, 'my 'vaſſals groan under the burthens of conſtraint: 'I would wiſh to hear no more of it. Let us 'ſee what they owe yet of the year's impoſt; I 'am come to acquit them.' 'Sir,' replied the receiver to me, 'that cannot be.' 'Why ſo?' ſaid I.—'It is not the rule.'—'How! not the 'rule to pay the king the tribute which he de-'mands? to pay it him with the leaſt expence 'poſſible, and with the leaſt delay?'—'Yes,' 'ſaid he, 'that is the king's intereſt; but not 'mine. What would become of me, if it were 'to be paid down? The expences are the per-

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'quiſites of my office.' To ſo good a reaſon, 'I had no reply; and without inſiſting farther, 'went to ſee the intendant.' 'I beg two favours of you,' ſaid I to him: 'one, that I 'may be permitted every year, to pay the tribute for my vaſſals; the other, that their diſtrict may experience only the variations of the 'publick tax. I obtained what I aſked.'

'Friends,' ſaid I to my peaſants, whom I aſaſembled at my arrival, 'I now give you notice, that it is in my hands you are to depoſite 'for the future, the juſt tribute which you owe 'to the king. No more vexations, no more expence. Every Sunday, at the pariſh bank, 'your wives ſhall bring their ſavings, and you 'will be inſenſibly cleared. Labour, cultivate 'your eſtates, increaſe their value to a hundred 'fold; may the ground enrich you; you ſhall 'not be charged the more for it: I, your father, 'will be anſwerable to you for it. Thoſe who 'ſhall be deficient, I will aſſiſt; and a few days 'of the dead ſeaſon of the year, employed on 'my works, will reimburſe me what I advance.

'This plan was approved, and we have followed it. Our farmers wives never fail to 'bring me their little offering. On receiving 'it, I encourage them, I tell them of our good 'king; they go away with tears in their 'eyes: thus, I make an act of love of what they 'looked upon, before my time, as an act of ſervitude.

'The ſtatute-works had their turn, and the 'intendant, who deteſted them, but knew not 'how to remedy them, was enchanted at the 'method which I had taken to exempt my village from them.

'Laſtly,

'Laſtly, as there was here a great deal of ſuperfluous time, and uſeleſs hands, I eſtabliſhed the work-houſe, which you may have ſeen. It is the property of the community; they adminiſter it under their own eyes; every one works there; but that labour is not ſufficiently paid to divert them from working in the fields. The huſbandman employs in it only the time which would otherwiſe be loſt. The profit which they draw from it, forms a fund which is employed in contributing to the militia, and to the expences of publick works. But an advantage, more precious ſtill, from this eſtabliſhment, is to have increaſed the human race. When children are a charge, we get no more than we are able to maintain; but from the moment, that at their iſſue from the cradle, they are able to provide for their own ſubſiſtence, nature delivers herſelf up to her attraction, without reſerve or uneaſineſs. We ſeek the means of population; there is but one: the ſubſiſtence, the employment of mankind. As they are born only to live, we muſt enſure them a livelihood at their birth.'

'Nothing wiſer than your principles, nothing more virtuous than your cares; but confeſs,' replied the Miſanthrope, 'that this good, important as it is, is not ſo difficult as to diſcourage thoſe who love it; and that if there were men like you . . .'—'Say, rather, if they were ſo ſituated. I have had circumſtances in my favour, and every thing depends upon that. We ſee what is right; we love it; we wiſh to affect it; but obſtacles ariſe on every ſtep we take. There needs but one to prevent it; and inſtead of one, there ariſe a thouſand. I

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'was here very much at my eaſe: not a man of 'credit had an intereſt in the evil which I meant 'to deſtroy; and how little would have been 'ſufficient to prevent my being able to remedy 'it? Suppoſe, inſtead of a tractable intendant, 'I had been under the neceſſity of ſeeing, per-'ſuading, prevailing on an abſolute man, jealous 'of his power, entirely led by his own opinions, 'or ſwayed by the counſels of his ſubaltern of-'ficers. Nothing of all this ſcheme could have 'taken place: they would have told me not to 'buſy myſelf, but to let things of this kind 'alone. Thus it is that good-will remains often 'uſeleſs on the part of the rich. I know that 'you do not ſuſpect it; but there is in your 'prejudices more caprice than you imagine.'

Alceſtes, touched to the quick by this reproach, from a man whoſe eſteem was to him of ſo great value, endeavoured to juſtifyhimſelf. He told him of the law-ſuit he had loſt, of the coquet who had deceived him, and of all his ſubjects of complaint againſt human nature.

'Truely,' ſaid the Viſcount to him, 'this 'was a mighty matter to make one uneaſy! 'You go to chooſe among a thouſand women a 'giddy creature, who amuſes herſelf, and makes 'a fool of you, as it were with reaſon; you 'take, moſt ſeriouſly, that love of which ſhe 'makes a mere diverſion; who is to blame? 'But granting her wrong, are all women like 'her? What! becauſe there are knaves among 'the men, are you and I the leſs honeſt on that 'account? In the individual, who hurts you, 'you hate the ſpecies! There is caprice, neighbour, there is caprice in this, you muſt agree.

'You

'You have loſt a cauſe which you thought
'juſt; but does not a ſuitor, who is a perſon of
'integrity, always think that he has a good
'cauſe? Are you alone more diſintereſted,
'more infallible than your judges? And if they
'have wanted lights, are they criminal for
'that? I, Sir, when I ſee men devote them-
'ſelves to a ſtate of life which has many trou-
'bles in it, and very few pleaſures, which im-
'poſes on their manners, all the conſtraint of
'the moſt ſevere decorum, which requires an
'unremitted application, a ſteady recollection,
'a labour without any ſalary, where virtue her-
'ſelf is almoſt without luſtre; when I ſee them
'environed with the luxury and ſplendor of an
'opulent city, live retired, ſolitary, in the fru-
'gality, ſimplicity, and modeſty of the firſt ages,
'I conſider, as a ſacrilege, the reproach of
'their equity. Now, ſuch is the life of the
'greater part of the judges whom you accuſe
'upon ſuch ſlight foundations. It is not ſome
'giddy perſons, whom you ſee fluttering in the
'world, that hold the balance of the laws. Till
'ſuch time as they become more prudent, they
'have at leaſt the modeſty to be ſilent before
'conſummate judges. The latter are ſome-
'times miſtaken, without doubt, becauſe they
'are not angels; but they are leſs of men than
'you and I; and I will never be perſuaded,
'that a venerable old man, who at the break
'of day drags himſelf to the hall with a tot-
'tering pace, goes there to commit injuſtice.

'With regard to the court, there are ſo ma-
'ny intereſts in it, ſo complicated, and ſo pow-
'erful, which thwart and oppoſe each other,
'that it is natural that men ſhould there be

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'more delivered up to their paſſions, and more 'wicked than elſewhere. But neither you nor 'I have paſſed through theſe great trials of am-'bition and envy; and it has depended, per-'haps, on but a trifle, that we have not been 'as well as others, falſe friends and baſe flat-'terers. Believe me, Sir, few people have a 'right to ſettle the *police* of the world.'

'All honeſt people have that right,' ſaid Alceſtes; 'and if they would league themſelves 'together, the wicked would not have ſo much 'audaciouſneſs and credit in the world.' 'When 'that league is formed,' ſaid M. de Laval, going away, 'we will both enroll ourſelves in it. 'Till then, neighbour, I adviſe you to do with-'out noiſe, in your little corner the utmoſt 'good you can, by taking for a rule the love of 'mankind, and in reſerving your hatred for a 'few ſad exceptions.'

'It is a very great pity,' ſaid Alceſtes, when M. de Laval was gone, 'that goodneſs ſhould 'be always accompanied with weakneſs, while 'wickedneſs has ſo much ſtrength and vigour!' 'It is a very great pity,' ſaid M. de Laval, 'that this honeſt man has taken a bias, which 'renders him uſeleſs to himſelf and others! 'he has uprightneſs, he loves virtue; but vir-'tue is but a chimera without the love of hu-'man nature.' Thus both, judging each other, were diſpleaſed with one another.

An incident, pretty ſingular, rendered Alceſtes ſtill leſs at his eaſe with M. de Laval. The Baron of Blonzac, a right Gaſcon, a man of honour, but haughty, and a Miſanthrope in his manner, had married the Canoneſs of Remiremont, a relation of the Viſcount. His garriſon

riſon was in Lorraine. He came to ſee M. de Laval; and whether it was to amuſe himſelf, or to correct two Miſanthropes by means of each other, M. de Laval wanted to ſet them by the ears. He ſent to invite Alceſtes to dinner.

Among men, table-talk turns pretty often upon politicks; and the Gaſcon, from the moment they had dined, began laying on, and drinking at a great rate. 'I make no point of 'concealing it,' ſaid he; 'I have taken an 'averſion to the world. I would be two thouſand 'leagues out of my own country, and two 'thouſand years out of my own age. It is the 'country of whores and knaves; it is the age 'of favourites, intrigue and favour have done 'their parts, and have forgot nothing but me-'rit. He that pays his court obtains every 'thing, and he that does his duty has nothing. 'Myſelf, for example, who have never known 'but to march where honour calls, and to 'fight as becomes a ſoldier, I am known by the 'enemy; but may the devil take me if either 'the miniſtry, or the court, know that I exiſt. 'If they were to hear any mention of me, they 'would take me for one of my grandfathers; 'and if they ſhould be told that a cannon-ball 'had taken off my head, I will lay a wager they 'would aſk, if there were any more Blonzacs?' 'Why do not you ſhew yourſelf?' ſaid M. de Laval to him. 'There is no neceſſity to let 'one's ſelf be forgot.'——'Why, my lord, I 'ſhow myſelf in the day of battle. Is it at Pa-'ris that the colours are flying?'

In the midſt of this talk, letters were brought M. de Laval from Paris. He aſks leave to read

them, ‘ in order to know,’ ſaid he, ‘ if there ‘ be any thing new;’ and one of his letters in- ‘ forms him, that the command of the citadel, ‘ which he ſollicited for M. de Blonzac, with- ‘ out his knowledge, had juſt been granted him. ‘ Hold,’ ſaid he to him, ‘ there now is one ‘ who regards you.’ Blonzac read, leaped with joy, and ran to embrace the Viſcount; but after the ſally he had made, he durſt not mention what had happened to him. Alceſtes, believing he had found in him a ſecond, did not fail in urging him. ‘ There,’ ſaid he, ‘ there ‘ now is an example of thoſe acts of injuſtice ‘ which ſhock me: a man of birth, a good ‘ ſoldier, after having ſerved the ſtate, remains ‘ forgotten, unrewarded; and let them tell me ‘ now, that all goes well.’ ‘ Why, replied Blonzac, ‘ we muſt be juſt: every thing goes ‘ not ſo ill as is ſaid. Rewards are to be wait- ‘ ed for a little; but they come in time. It is ‘ not the fault of the miniſtry, if more ſervices ‘ are performed than there are rewards to be ‘ beſtowed; and, in fact, they do what they ‘ can.’ Alceſtes was a little ſurpriſed at this change of language, and the apologetical tone which Blonzac aſſumed, during the reſt of the entertainment. ‘ Come,’ ſaid the Viſcount, ‘ in order to reconcile you, let us drink the ‘ Commandant’s health;’ and he publiſhed what he had juſt learnt. ‘ I aſk the gentleman’s par- ‘ don,’ ſaid Alceſtes, ‘ for having dwelt on ‘ his complaints: I did not know the rea- ‘ ſons which he had to retract them.’---‘ I!’ ſaid Blonzac, ‘ I have no animoſity, and I ‘ come to like a child.’ ‘ You ſee,’ reſumed M. de Laval, ‘ that a Miſanthrope is to be

‘ brought

'brought back to reaſon.'----'Yes,' replied Alceſtes, 'when he regulates his ſentiments on 'his own perſonal intereſt.'---'Ah, Sir,' ſaid Blonzac, do you know any one who is warm 'for what touches him neither nearly, nor at a 'diſtance?' 'Every thing that concerns hu-'manity,' replied Alceſtes, 'touches a good 'man nearly; and doubt not but there are 'friends enough of the order, to hate the evil 'as evil, without any reſpect to themſelves.'--- 'I will believe it,' replied the Gaſcon, 'when 'I ſee any one uneaſy at what paſſes in China; 'but as long as people are afflicted only at the 'hurt which they feel themſelves, or which 'they may feel, I ſhall believe that they think 'only of themſelves, while they have the air 'of being taken up with the thought of others. 'As for me, I am ſincere: I never gave my-'ſelf up as an advocate for the diſcontented. 'Let every one plead his own cauſe. I com-'plained while I had reaſon to complain; I 'now make my peace with the world, as ſoon 'as I have reaſon to be ſatisfied with it.'

As much as the ſcene with Blonzac diſturbed Alceſtes, ſo much did it rejoice M. de Laval and his daughter. 'There,' ſaid they, 'has 'our Miſanthrope received a good leſſon.'

Whether it was ſhame, or policy, he was ſome days without ſeeing them. He came again, however, one afternoon. The Viſcount was gone to the village: Mademoiſelle de Laval received him; and on ſeeing himſelf alone with her, a tranſport ſeiſed him, which he had ſome difficulty to conceal.

'We have not had the honour of ſeeing you,' ſaid ſhe to him, 'ſince M. de Blonzac's viſit;

'what ſay you to that gentleman?' ——— 'Why, he is a man like the reſt.'—'Not ſo much like the reſt: he ſpeaks with an open heart, he ſays what others conceal; and that frankneſs makes him, in my opinion, a pretty ſingular character.'---'Yes, Mademoiſelle, frankneſs is rare; and I am very glad to ſee that at your age you are convinced of it. You will often have occaſion to recollect it, I promiſe you. Ah! in what a world you are going to fall! My lord excuſes it in the beſt manner he is able; his own beautiful ſoul does the reſt of mankind the honour to judge of them according to itſelf; but if you knew how dangerous and hateful the greater part are!'---'You, for example,' ſaid Urſula, ſmiling, 'you have very great reaſon to complain of it, is it not true?' 'Spare me, I pray you, and attribute not to me the perſonalities of M. Blonzac. I think as he does in certain reſpects; but our motives are not the ſame.'---'I believe it; but explain to me what I am not able to conceive. Vice and virtue, I have been told, are nothing more than relative terms. The one is vice, becauſe it hurts mankind; the other virtue, on account of the good which it occaſions.'---'Exactly ſo.'---'To hate vice, to love virtue, is therefore only to intereſt ourſelves in the welfare of mankind, and in order to intereſt ourſelves, we muſt love them. For how can you at once intereſt yourſelf, and hate them?'——'I intereſt myſelf in the welfare of the good whom I love, and I deteſt the wicked who hurt them; but the good are ſo very few in number, and the world is ſo full of bad people.'——'See there now.

'Your

'Your hatred at leaſt extends not to all mankind. But do you think that thoſe whom you love are every where ſo few in number? Let us make a voyage together in idea. Do you agree to it?'——'With all my heart.'---Firſt, in the country, are you not perſuaded that there are morals, and if not virtues, at leaſt ſimplicity, goodneſs, innocence?'—'There is alſo commonly diſtruſt and craft.'---'Alas, I can eaſily conceive what my father has ſaid more than once: craft and diſtruſt are the conſequence of weakneſs. We find them in the villagers, as in women and children. They have every thing to fear; they eſcape, they defend themſelves as well as they can; and we obſerve the ſame inſtinct in moſt animals.'---'Yes,' ſaid Alceſtes, 'and that very circumſtance forms the ſatyr of the cruel and rapacious animals which they have to guard againſt.' ---I underſtand you; but we are now ſpeaking only of the country people, and you will agree with me, that they are more worthy of pity than of hatred.'---'Oh, I agree.'---'Let us paſs to the cities, and take Paris for example.' ---My God! what an example you chooſe.' ---Very well, even in that ſame Paris, the common people are good: my father frequents them; he goes often into thoſe obſcure receſſes, where poor families crowded together groan in want; he ſays that he finds there a modeſty, patience, an honeſty, and ſometimes even an nobleneſs of thinking, which moves and aſtoniſhes him.'---'And this it is which ought to ſet us againſt an unpitying world, which forſakes ſuffering virtue, and pays reſpect to ſucceſsful and inſolent vice.'---'Not

'ſo faſt: we are at the common people. Agree 'that, in general, they are good, docile, cour-'teous, honeſt, and that their own ſincerity 'gives them a confidence which is very often 'abuſed.'---'Oh, very often!'---'You love 'the common people then? And in all places 'the common people form the greater num-'ber.'---'Not every where.'---'We are ſpeak-'ing only of our own country: it is with that 'which I would reconcile you at preſent. Now 'let us come to the great folks, and tell me, 'firſt, if my father has impoſed on me in 'it, when he has painted the manners of the 'women. As their duties,' ſaid ſhe, 'are in-'cluded in the interiour of a private life, their 'virtues have nothing dazzling; it is only their 'vices that are conſpicuous; and the folly of 'one woman, makes more noiſe than the diſ-'cretion of a thouſand. Thus the evil riſes in 'evidence, and the good remains buried. My 'father adds, that one moment of weakneſs, 'one imprudence, ruins a woman, and that 'this blemiſh has ſometimes tarniſhed a thou-'ſand excellent qualities. He confeſſes, in ſhort, 'that the vice which we moſt reproach women 'with, and which does them the moſt injury, 'hurts only themſelves, and that there is no 'reaſon for hating them. For the reſt, what 'is it you reproach us with? a little falſe-'hood? But that is all by agreement. Inſtruct-'ed from our infancy to endeavour to pleaſe 'you, we have no other care but to conceal 'what will not pleaſe you. If we diſguiſe 'ourſelves, it is only under thoſe charms which 'you love better than our own. And do you 'know that nothing is more humiliating to us?

'I am

'I am young; but I can eaſily perceive, that 'the moſt beautiful act of our freedom, is to 'ſhow ourſelves ſuch as we are; but to diſguiſe 'one's ſoul, and to diſavow one's ſelf, is of 'all the acts of ſervitude the moſt degrading; 'and we muſt do to ſelf-love the moſt pain-'ful violence, to debaſe one's ſelf to a lie, and 'to diſſimulation? This is what I find a woman 'a ſlave in; and it is a yoke which has been 'impoſed on us.—'If all women thought as 'nobly as you do, beautiful Urſula, they would 'not ſo lightly, and in gaiety of heart, make a 'mere paſtime of deceiving us.'—'If they de-'ceive you, it is your own fault. You are our 'kings: convince us that you love nothing ſo 'much as truth; that truth alone pleaſes and 'touches you, and we will tell it you always. 'What is the ambition of a woman? To be 'lovely, and to be loved. Very well, write 'on the apple, *To the moſt ſincere*; they will 'all diſpute it with each other in unaffected ſim-'plicity. But you have written, *To the moſt 'ſeducing*; and each tries, who ſhall ſeduce you 'the beſt. As for our jealouſies, our little ani-'moſities, our tattlings, our bickerings; all 'theſe things are only amuſing to you; and you 'will agree that your wars are of very different 'conſequence. Nothing remains then but the 'frivolouſneſs of our taſtes and humours; but 'when ever you pleaſe, we ſhall be more ſolid; 'and, perhaps, there are many women who 'have ſeiſed, as it were by ſtealth, lights and 'principles which cuſtom envied them.'—'You 'are a proof of it,' ſaid Alceſtes to her, 'you 'whoſe ſoul is ſo much above your ſex and your 'age.'—'I am young,' replied Urſula, 'and

'I have a right to your indulgence; but 'the queſtion is not concerning me, it is the 'world which you fly, which you abandon, 'without well knowing why. I have attempted 'the defence of the women; I leave to my fa- 'ther the care of accompliſhing that of the men; 'but I tell you before-hand, that in giving me 'the picture of their ſociety, he has often told 'me, that there were almoſt as few perverſe 'minds as there are heroick ſouls, and that the 'majority was compoſed of weak, harmleſs peo- 'ple, who required nothing but peace and qui- 'et.'——'Yes, peace and quiet, every one for 'himſelf, and at the expence of the perſon to 'whom it belongs. The world, Mademoiſelle, 'is compoſed only of dupes and knaves: now, 'no body would be a dupe; and to ſpeak only 'of what concerns yourſelf, I muſt tell you, 'that all the idle people there are at Paris of an 'age to pleaſe, are employed morning and even- 'ing in nothing elſe but in laying ſnares for the 'women.'——'Good!' ſaid Urſula, 'they 'know it; and my father is perſuaded that this 'conteſt of galantry on the one ſide, and co- 'quetry on the other, is nothing but a diverſi- 'on, in which both are agreed. Let who will 'be of the party: thoſe who like not the ſport, 'have only to keep themſelves in their own cor- 'ners; and nothing, he ſays, is in leſs danger 'than virtue, when it is real.'——'You think 'ſo?'——'I am ſo thoroughly perſuaded of it, 'that if ever I commit an indiſcretion, I declare 'to you before-hand, it will be becauſe I ſhall 'have liked it.'——'Without doubt they like 'it, but they like it when ſeduced by an enchan- 'ter who makes you like it.'—'That alſo is an

'excuſe

'excuſe which at preſent I renounce: I have no 'faith in enchantments.'

They were got ſo far, when Monſieur de Lava arrived from his walk. 'What ſay you to Alceſ-'tes?' continued Urſula. 'He would have me 'tremble at being expoſed in the world to the 'ſeduction of the men.'—'Why,' ſaid the fa-ther, 'we muſt not be too confident; I do not 'think thee infallible.'—'No, but you ſhall be 'my guard; and if you loſe ſight of me, you 'know what you have promiſed me.'—'I will 'endeavour to keep my word.'—'May I be in 'the ſecret?' demanded Alceſtes, with a timid air.—'There is no ſecret in it;' replied Urſula. 'My father has had the goodneſs to inſtruct me 'in my duties; and if he could guide me perpe-'tually, I ſhould be very ſure of not going 'aſtray. If I forget myſelf, he would not for-'get me; accuſtomed to read my ſoul, he would 'regulate all its motions; but as he will not al-'ways have his eyes upon me, he has promiſed 'me another guide, a huſband, which may be 'his friend and mine, and who ſhall ſupply the 'place of a father.'—'Add alſo, and of a lo-'ver; for a young woman muſt have love. I 'would have you be diſcreet, but I would like-'wiſe have you be happy; and if I had the im-'prudence to give you a huſband who did not 'love you, or knew not how to pleaſe you, I 'ſhould no longer have the right of taking it ill, 'that the deſire of enjoying the greateſt of feli-'cities, that of loving and being loved, ſhould 'make you forget my leſſons.'

Alceſtes went away, charmed at the wiſdom of ſo good a father, and more ſtill with the can-dour and honeſty of the daughter. 'A diſtinc-

'tion has been made,' ſaid he, 'between the 'age of innocence and of reaſon, but in her 'happy diſpoſition, innocence and reaſon unite. 'Her ſoul purifies, at the ſame time that it en-'lightens itſelf. Ah! if there were a man 'worthy of cultivating gifts ſo precious, what a 'ſource of delicious enjoyments to him! There 'is nothing but this world filled with ſhelves, 'from which it is neceſſary to keep her at a 'diſtance. But if ſhe loved, what would it be 'to her? A virtuous and tender huſband would 'ſuffice her, would be to her inſtead of every 'thing. I dare believe, that at twenty-five, I 'was the man who ſuited her. .... At twen-'ty-five! and what did I know then? To amuſe 'myſelf, and run into diſſipations? Was I ca-'pable of filling the place of a wiſe and vigilant 'father? I ſhould have loved her to diſtraction; 'but what confidence ſhould I have inſpired in-'to her? It is not, perhaps, too much yet to 'have fifteen years more experience. But from 'eighteen to forty, the interval muſt be fright-'ful to her. There is no thinking of it.'

He thought of it, however, all night long; the next day he did nothing elſe; and the day following, the firſt idea which preſented itſelf to him was that of his amiable Urſula. 'Ah, what 'a pity,' ſaid he, 'what a pity, if ſhe were to 'take to the vices of the world! her ſoul is pure 'as her beauty. What ſweetneſs in her tem-'ter! what touching ſimplicity in her manners 'and language! They talk of eloquence; is 'there any truer? It was impoſſible for her to 'convince me, but ſhe has perſuaded me. I 'have deſired to think like her: I could have 'wiſhed that the illuſion, which ſhe ſpread be-

'fore

'fore me, were never diſſipated. Why have I 'not over her, or rather over her father, that 'ſoft empire which ſhe has over me! I would 'engage them to live here in the ſimplicity of 'nature. And what need ſhould we have of the 'world? Ah! Three hearts, thoroughly unit-'ed, two lovers and a father, have they not, in 'the intimacy of a mutual tenderneſs, ſufficient 'to render themſelves fully happy?'

In the evening, on walking out, his ſteps turned, as it were of themſelves, towards M. de Laval's gardens. He found him there with the pruning knife in his hand, amidſt his eſpaliers. 'Confeſs,' ſaid he to him, 'that theſe tranquil 'pleaſures are well worth thoſe noiſy one's 'which people like, or think they like, at Paris.' 'Every thing has its ſeaſon,' replied the Viſ-'count. 'I love the country, while it is alive; 'I am uſeleſs at Paris, and my village has need 'of me; I enjoy myſelf there and the good 'which I do; my daughter is pleaſed and amuſ-'ed there; this is what attracts and retains me. 'But think not that I live there alone. Our lit-'tle town of Bruyeres is full of honeſt people, 'who love and cultivate letters. There is no 'part of the world, where the inhabitants have 'gentler manners. They are polite with free-'dom; plain, yet informed. Candour, up-'rightneſs, and gaiety, are the character of that 'amiable people; they are ſocial, humane, be-'neficent. Hoſpitality is a virtue, which the 'father tranſmits to his ſon. The women are 'ſprightly and virtuous; and ſociety, embel-'liſhed by them, unites the charms of decency 'to the pleaſures of liberty. But in enjoying ſo 'ſweet a commerce, I ceaſe not ſtill to love Pa-

'ris;

'ris; and if friendſhip, the love of letters, con-
'nections which I hold dear, did not recall me
'there, the attraction of variety alone would carry
'me back every year. The moſt lively pleaſures
'languiſh at laſt, and the ſweeteſt become inſi-
'pid to him, who knows not how to vary them.'

I can conceive, however,' ſaid the Miſanthrope, 'that a ſociety, not numerous, intimately connected with eaſe and truth, might 'ſupply every thing to itſelf; and if an offer, 'agreeable to Mademoiſelle de Laval, had no 'other inconvenience in it than that of fixing 'her in the country, I am perſuaded that you 'yourſelf...' 'Why truly,' ſaid M. de Laval, 'if my daughter could be happy there, I 'ſhould make her happineſs mine: that is 'moſt certain. It is now fifty years ſince I 'have lived for myſelf; it is high time now that 'I ſhould live for her. But we are not come to 'that. My daughter loves Paris, and I am rich 'enough to ſettle her there decently.'

This was enough for Alceſtes, and for fear of diſcovering himſelf, he turned the converſation to gardening, by aſking M. de Laval if he did not cultivate flowers? 'They paſs away too 'ſoon,' replied the Viſcount. 'The pleaſure 'and regret of them border ſo nearly on each 'other, and the idea of deſtruction intermingles I 'know not what of melancholy in the ſentiment 'of enjoyment. In a word, I feel more chagrin 'in ſeeing a roſe-buſh ſtripped, than joy in ſee-'ing it flouriſh. The culture of kitchen-herbs 'has an intereſt more gradual, more ſupported, 'and, to ſay the truth, more ſatisfactory; for it 'terminates in the uſeful. While art exerciſes 'and fatigues itſelf in varying the ſcenes of a

'flower

'flower garden, nature herſelf changes the de-
'corations of the kitchen garden. How many
'metamorphoſes, for example have theſe peach-
'trees experienced, from the very budding of
'their leaves to the full maturity of their fruits!
'talk to me, neighbour, of laſting pleaſures.
'Thoſe, which like flowers, endure but a day;
'coſt too much to renew.'

Maſter of the father's temper, Alceſtes wanted to inform himſelf of that of the daughter, and it was eaſy for him to have a private converſation with her. 'The more I penetrate,' ſaid he to her, 'into your father's heart, the more 'I admire and love him.' 'So much the better,' ſaid Urſula, 'his example will ſoften your man-'ners; he will reconcile you with thoſe like 'him.'—'Like him! Ah, how few there are 'of them! It is to him, without doubt, a fa-'vour from heaven to have a daughter like you, 'beautiful Urſula; but it is a happineſs as rare 'to have a father like him. May the huſband 'which the Almighty deſtines you, be worthy 'both of one and the other!' 'Pray to heaven,' ſaid ſhe ſmiling, 'that he be not a miſanthrope! 'Men of that caſt are too difficult to correct.' 'Would you like better,' ſaid Alceſtes, 'one 'of thoſe cold and trifling men, whom every 'thing amuſes, and nothing intereſts; one of 'thoſe weak and eaſy men, whom the mode 'bends, and faſhions to her own taſte, who are 'wax, with reſpect to the manners of the time, 'and to whom cuſtom is the ſupreme law? A 'Miſanthrope loves but few; but when he 'loves, he loves truly.'——'Yes, I perceive 'that ſuch a conqueſt is flattering to vanity; but 'I am plain, and not vain. I would not find in

'a heart

'a heart devoted to me, aſperity, or moroſe-
'neſs; I would wiſh to be able to communicate
'to it the ſoftneſs of my own temper, and that
'ſentiment of univerſal benevolence, which
'makes me ſee men and things on the moſt
'comfortable ſide. I could not ſpend my life in
'loving a man who would paſs his in hatred.'—
'That is not civil, for they accuſe me of being
'a Miſanthrope.'——'Why, it is from you,
'and you alone, that I have taken the idea of
'that character: for M. de Blonzac's humour
'was nothing but a fit of the pouts; and you
'have ſeen how ſmall a matter could bring him
'to himſelf again; but a hatred of mankind,
'ariſing from reflection and founded on princi-
'ples, is horrible; and this is what you profeſs.
'I am perſuaded that your averſion for the
'world is nothing but whim, an exceſs of vir-
'tue: you are not wicked, you are only rigid;
'and I believe you as little indulgent to
'yourſelf as to another; but this too ſevere and
'impatient probity, renders you unſociable; and
'you muſt confeſs, that a huſband of that tem-
'per, would not be entertaining?'——'You
'would have a huſband entertain you then?'—
'and entertain himſelf,' replied ſhe, 'with the
'ſame things as me; for if marriage be a parti-
'cipation of cares, it ought in return to be a
'ſociety of pleaſures.'

'Nothing clearer,' ſaid Alceſtes to himſelf, after their converſation: 'She could not have
'told me her thoughts more plainly, though
'ſhe had divined mine. This is for me, and
'my comrades, a diſcharge beforehand. And
'what am I thinking of? I am forty years, free
'and eaſy; it depends on myſelf only to be
'happy...

'happy . . . Happy! And can I be ſo alone, with
'a ſoul ſo ſenſible! I fly the men! Ah! it was
'the women, the handſome women, whom I
'ought to have flown. I thought I knew
'them ſufficiently to have no more to fear from
'them; but who could have expected what has
'happened to me? I muſt, to my misfortune,
'in the corner of a province, find beauty, youth,
'graces, wiſdom, virtue herſelf, united in one
'and the ſame object. It ſeems as if love pur-
'ſued me, and that he had purpoſely made this
'dear girl to confound and diſtreſs me. And
'what a way ſhe takes to trouble my repoſe! I
'deteſt airs; nothing more ſimple than ſhe. I
'deſpiſe coquetry; ſhe thinks not even of pleaſ-
'ing: I love, I adore candour; her ſoul ſhows
'itſelf quite naked: ſhe tells me, to my face,
'the moſt cruel truths. What would ſhe do
'more, if ſhe had reſolved to turn my brain?
'She is very young; ſhe will change: launch-
'ed into the world, which ſhe loves, ſhe will
'ſoon aſſume the manners of it; and it is to be
'believed that ſhe will at laſt be a woman like
'the reſt . . . . To be believed! Ah! I do not
'believe it; and if I believed it, I ſhould be
'too unjuſt. She will be the happineſs and
'glory of her huſband, if he be worthy of her.
'And I, I ſhall live alone, detached from every
'thing, in a ſtate of ſolitude and annihilation;
'for it muſt be confeſſed, the ſoul is annihilated
'as ſoon as it loves nothing any longer. What
'do I ſay? Alas! If I loved no longer, would
'that repoſe, that ſleep of the ſoul be frightful
'to me? Flattering idea of a greater happineſs!
'It is thou, thou that makeſt me perceive the
'void and dulneſs of myſelf. Ah! to cheriſh

'my

'my ſolitude for ever, I ſhould never have gone 'out of it.'

Theſe reflexions, and theſe ſtruggles, plunged him into a melancholy, which he thought it his duty to bury. Eight days having rolled away, the Viſcount ſurpriſed at not ſeeing him again, ſent to know if he was ſick. Alceſtes returned anſwer, that in fact he had not been well for ſome time paſt. The ſenſible ſoul of Urſula was affected at this anſwer. She had entertained, ſince his abſence, ſome ſuſpicion of the truth; ſhe was now the more perſuaded of it, and reproached herſelf for having afflicted him. 'Let us go 'and ſee him,' ſaid the Viſcount, 'his conditi-'on moves my pity. Ah, daughter, what a 'gloomy and painful reſolution is that of living 'alone, and of being ſufficient to one's ſelf! 'man is too weak to ſupport it.'

When Alceſtes ſaw Mademoiſelle de Laval, for the firſt time, enter his houſe, it ſeemed as if his habitation had transformed itſelf into a temple. He was ſeiſed with joy and reſpect; but the impreſſion of melancholy ſtill made an alteration in his features. 'What is the matter, 'Alceſtes?' ſaid M. de Laval to him. 'I find 'you afflicted: and you lay hold of that moment 'to fly me. Do you think us ſome of thoſe 'people who do not love ſorrowful countenances, 'and who muſt always be accoſted with a laugh? 'When you are eaſy and happy, keep at home; 'very well; but when you have any grief, come 'to me, either to pity or conſole you.' Alceſtes liſtened, and admired in ſilence. 'Yes,' ſaid he, 'I am ſtruck with a thought which purſues 'and afflicts me: I would not, and I ought not 'to conceal it from you. Heaven is my witneſs,

'that

'that after having renounced the world, I re-
'gretted nothing, when I knew you. Since, I
'perceive that I deliver myſelf up to the pleaſure
'of your company; that my ſoul is attached to
'you by all the ties of eſteem and friendſhip;
'and that when they muſt be broken, alas! per-
'haps for ever, this retreat, which I ſhould
'have cheriſhed, will be my grave. My reſo-
'lution, therefore is taken, not to wait till the
'charm of ſo ſweet a connection, render the ſo-
'litude in which I am to live completely odious;
'and in revering you, in loving both the one
'and the other, as two beings by which nature
'is to procure honour to herſelf, and of which
'the world is not worthy, I beg you to permit
'me to bid you an eternal farewell. Then tak-
'ing the Viſcount's hands, and kiſſing them re-
'ſpectfully, he watered them with his tears. I
'will ſee you no more, Sir, added he, but I will
'hold you dear for ever.'

'Nonſenſe,' ſaid M. de Laval to him! 'and
'who hinders us to live together, if you like my
'acquaintance? You have taken an averſion to
'the world: A mere whim; but no matter: I
'know you have a good heart; and though our
'tempers may not be the ſame, I ſee nothing in-
'compatible in them; and perhaps, they reſem-
'ble each other more than you imagine. Why
'then take a reſolution which afflicts you, and
'which would afflict me? you think with ſor-
'row on the moment of our ſeparation; it de-
'pends only on yourſelf to follow us. Nothing
'more eaſy than to live at Paris, free, ſolitary,
'and detached from the world. My company
'is not tumultuous; it ſhall be your's; and I
'promiſe you, I will not force you to ſee any

'but

'but ſuch as you ſhall eſteem.' 'Your goodneſs 'penetrates me,' ſaid Alceſtes, 'and I know 'what I owe to ſuch kindneſs.' 'Nothing in 'it,' replied the Viſcount: 'ſuch as you are, 'you ſuit me: I eſteem you, I pity you, and if I 'deliver you up to your own melancholy, you 'are a loſt man. That would be a pity; and 'the condition which you are in, permits me 'not to abandon you. In a month, I quit the 'country; I have room for you; and whether 'under the title of friendſhip, or gratitude, I 'inſiſt on your accepting it.' Ah,' ſaid Alceſtes, 'that it were poſſible!' 'Have you,' demanded the Viſcount, 'any obſtacle? If your 'fortune were out of order, I flatter myſelf that 'you are not the man to bluſh at confeſſing it.' 'No,' ſaid Alceſtes; 'I am richer than a ſingle perſon has need to be. I have ten thouſand crowns a year, and owe nothing. But a 'more ſerious motive retains me here: you ſhall 'judge of it.'—'Come and ſup with us then, 'and I will diſperſe all theſe clouds if I can.' 'You make a hydra,' ſaid he to Alceſtes on the road, 'of the vice and wickedneſs you have ſeen 'in the world. Would you try now to what a 'ſmall number this claſs of men, who terrify 'you, are reduced? Make out a liſt of them 'with me this evening; and I defy you to name 'a hundred perſons, whom you have a right to 'hate.'—'O heaven! I could name a thouſand.'——'We'll ſee. Remember only to 'be juſt, and to eſtabliſh your complaints well.' —'Nay, it is not on particular facts that I 'judge them; but by the groſs of their manners. For example, it is pride which I condemn in ſome, meanneſs in others. I object to

'them,

'them, the abuſe of riches, of credit, of autho-
'rity, an excluſive love of themſelves, a cruel
'inſenſibility to the misfortunes and wants of
'others; and although theſe vices, in every
'ſtage of life have not features ſufficiently mark-
'ed, formally to exclude a man from the num-
'ber of honeſt people, they authoriſe me to ba-
'niſh him from the number of thoſe whom I
'eſteem and love.' From the inſtant that we
'talk in general,' ſaid the Viſcount, 'we de-
'claim as much as we pleaſe; but we render
'ourſelves liable to be unjuſt. Our eſteem is a
'poſſeſſion, of which we are but the depoſitaries,
'and which appertains of right to him who de-
'ſerves it; our contempt is a puniſhment,
'which it depends on us to inflict, but not ac-
'cording to our own caprice; and every one of
'us, in judging of his fellow, owes him the ex-
'amination which he would require, if it were
'himſelf were to be judged: for, in regard to
'manners, publick cenſure is a tribunal where
'we all ſit, but to which we are alſo all cited;
'now, who of us conſents that we ſhould be ac-
'cuſed there, on vague preſumptions, and to
'be condemned without proofs? Conſult your
'own heart, and ſee in yourſelf whether you
'duly obſerve the firſt of all laws.'

Alceſtes walked with his eyes caſt down, and ſighed deeply. 'You have in your mind,' ſaid the Viſcount, 'ſome deep wound, which I 'do not probe. I only combat your opinions, 'and it is, perhaps, to your ſenſations that I 'ought to apply the remedy.'

On theſe words, they arrive at the caſtle of Laval, and whether through penetration, or delicacy, Urſula ſteals away, and leaves them together.

'Sir,'

'Sir,' ſaid Alceſtes to the Viſcount, I am
'now going to talk to you as to a friend of
'twenty years: your goodneſs engages me, and
'my duty obliges me to it. It is but too true,
'that I muſt renounce what formed the conſo-
'lation, and the charm of my life, the pleaſure
'of ſeeing you, and living with you. Another
'man would make uſe of circumlocution, and
'bluſh to break ſilence; but I ſee nothing in my
'misfortune which I ought to diſſemble. I
'have not been able to ſee with indifference,
'what nature has formed the moſt accompliſhed
'in its kind: I confeſs it to Urſula's father, and
'I beſeech him to forget it after I have taken
'my leave.' How,' ſaid the Viſcount, 'is this
'the great ſecret! Very well, now we have it;
'you are in love: is there any thing in that to
'make you unhappy? Ah, I would fain be
'ſo yet, and far from being aſhamed, I ſhould
'glory in it. Come, we muſt endeavour to
'pleaſe, to be very tender, very complaiſant:
'we are ſtill amiable at your age; perhaps you
'will be beloved.'—'Ah, Sir, you do not un-
'derſtand me.'—'Pardon me, I believe I do.
'You are in love with Urſula?'—'Alas, yes,
'Sir.'—'Very well, who hinders you from
'trying, at leaſt, if ſo good a heart will be
'touched with the feelings of your's?'--'What,
'Sir, do you authoriſe me!...'—'Why not?
'Sure you think me very difficult! you have
'by inheritance, a handſome fortune, and if my
'daughter conſents, I do not ſee what can hap-
'pen better.' Alceſtes fell in amaze, at the
'Viſcount's knees. Your goodneſs, Sir, over-
'powers me,' ſaid he, 'but it is of no ſervice
'to me. Mademoiſelle de Laval has declared

'to

'me, that a Miſanthrope was her averſion; and 'this is the idea ſhe has formed of my charac-'ter.'——'That does not ſignify: you will 'change.'—'I cannot diſſemble.'—'You ſhall 'not; you ſhall reconcile yourſelf to mankind, 'in good earneſt. You will not be the firſt bear 'that has been tamed by the women.'

Supper being ſerved up, they ſeated themſelves at table, and never before was M. de Laval in ſo ſprightly an humour. 'Come, neigh-'bour,' ſaid he, 'chear up: nothing ſets us off 'like ſpirits.' Alceſtes, thus encouraged, took heart. He made the moſt touching eulogy on the intimate commerce of ſouls, whom the reliſh of virtue, the love of truth, the ſentiment of what is juſt and honeſt, unites. 'What an at-'traction,' ſaid he, 'have they for each other! 'With what effuſion they communicate! 'What agreement, and what harmony they 'form in uniting. I find here but two that are 'like me; and they are a whole world to me. 'My ſoul is full, I could wiſh to be able to fix 'my exiſtence in this delicious ſtate, or that my 'life were a chain of incidents, reſembling this.' —'I would lay a wager,' replied the Viſcount, 'that if heaven were to take you at your word, 'you would be very ſorry not to have aſked 'more.'—'I confeſs it, and if I were worthy 'of forming yet one wiſh.'—'Did not I ſay ſo? 'Such is man. He has always ſomewhat to 'wiſh for. We are but three; and yet there 'is not one of us who does not wiſh for ſome-'thing: what ſay you, daughter? For my 'part, I confeſs, I aſk of heaven, with ardour, 'a huſband, whom you may love, and who 'may render you happy.'—'I aſk alſo,' ſaid ſhe,

ſhe, ‘ a huſband, who may aſſiſt me in making ‘ you happy.’—‘ And you, Alceſtes ?’—‘ And ‘ I, if I durſt, would aſk to be that huſband.’—‘ There now are three wiſhes,’ ſaid M. de Laval, ‘ which might eaſily be made one.’

I have already given ſome intimation, that Urſula had conceived for Alceſtes an eſteem and good-will : the trouble ſhe had taken to ſoften his temper, proclaimed it ; but it was only in this inſtant that ſhe perceived how ſenſibly that diſpoſition, which we muſt either love or hate, had touched her.

‘ Hey !’ ſaid her father, after a long ſilence, ‘ we are all three ſtruck dumb ! That Alceſtes, ‘ at forty, ſhould be confuſed at having made a ‘ declaration to a lady of eighteen, is natural ‘ enough ; that Urſula ſhould bluſh, look down, ‘ and obſerve a modeſt ſilence, is quite natural ‘ too ; but I, who am but a mere confident, ‘ why ſhould I be grave ? The ſcene is amuſing.’—‘ Sir,’ ſaid Urſula, ‘ ſpare me, I beſeech you. Alceſtes gives me a mark of eſteem, of which I am very ſenſible ; and he ‘ would be angry that we ſhould make a jeſt of ‘ it —— Would you have me believe that he is ‘ in earneſt ?’—‘ I am ſure of it, and I am obliged to him.’—‘ You do not think ſo. Forty ! ‘ A man of his temper.’—‘ His temper ſhould ‘ eſtrange him from all ſorts of engagements, ‘ and he knows very well what I think of it.’—‘ And his age !’—‘ That is another thing ; and ‘ I beg you to forget age, when you chooſe me ‘ a huſband.’—‘ Ah, child, but you are ſo ‘ young !’—‘ For that reaſon, I have need of a ‘ huſband who is not ſo.’—‘ There is nothing ‘ then but this unfortunate Miſanthropy, which

‘ you

'you have to object to him; and I own that it 'is incompatible with your temper'—'And 'more ſtill with the plan which I have formed 'to myſelf.'—'And what is that plan?—— 'That of nature: to live happily with my huſ- 'band, to ſacrifice my taſte to him, if unluck- 'ily I have not his, to renounce all ſociety, ra- 'ther than deprive me of his, and not to take 'one ſtep in the world without his counſel and 'conſent. Judge, therefore, of what concern 'it is to me, that his wiſdom ſhould have no- 'thing ſavage in it, and that he ſhould be pleaſ- 'ed with that world in which I hope to live 'with him.' 'Whoever he be, Mademoiſelle,' replied Alceſtes, 'I dare anſwer, that he will 'be pleaſed wherever you are.'—'My father,' continued Urſula, 'takes a pleaſure in bringing 'together to his ſuppers, a circle of genteel peo- 'ple, both of the city and court; I would wiſh 'my huſband to be of all theſe ſuppers, I would 'have him in particular be agreeable.'—'Ani- 'mated with the deſire of pleaſing you, he will 'certainly do his beſt.'—'I propoſe to myſelf 'to frequent the plays, the publick walks.'—— 'Alas! theſe were my only pleaſures, there are 'none more innocent.'—'Balls too are my paſ- 'ſion. And I would have my huſband carry me 'there.'—'In maſk, nothing is more eaſy.'— 'In a maſk, or without a maſk, juſt as I like.'— 'Right: that is a matter of indifference, as long 'as one is there with one's wife.'—'Nay more, 'I would have him dance there.'—'Very well, 'Mademoiſelle, I will dance there,' ſaid Alceſ- 'tes with tranſport, throwing himſelf at her 'feet.—'Nay,' cried the Viſcount, 'there is 'no reſiſting that; and ſince he conſents to

'dance

'dance at a ball, he will do impoſſibilities for 'you.'—'My lord thinks me ridiculous, and he 'has reaſon, but I muſt complete my being ſo. 'Yes, Mademoiſelle, you ſee at your feet, a 'friend, a lover, and ſince you will have it ſo, 'a ſecond father, a man, in ſhort, who re-'nounces life, if he is not to live for you.' Urſula enjoyed her triumph; but it was not the triumph of vanity. She reſtored to the world, and to himſelf, a virtuous man, a uſeful citizen, who but for her had been loſt. Such was the conqueſt with which ſhe was pleaſed; but her ſilence was her only conſent. Her eyes, timidly caſt on the ground, dared not raiſe themſelves to thoſe of Alceſtes: one of her hands only was ſuffered to drop into his, and the crimſon of her beautiful cheeks expreſſed the tranſport and emotion of her heart. 'Hey!' ſaid the father, 'you are motionleſs and dumb! What will you 'ſay to him?'—'Whatever you pleaſe.'—— 'what I pleaſe, is to ſee him happy, provided 'he make my daughter ſo.'—'It is in his pow-'er: he is virtuous, he reveres you, and you 'love him.'—'Let us embrace then, my chil-'dren. This has been a happy evening, and I 'forebode well of a marriage, which is conclud-'ed as in the good old times.' 'Take my ad-'vice, my friend,' continued he, 'be a man, 'and live with mankind. It is the intention of 'nature. She has given faults to us all, that no 'body may be diſpenſed with being indulgent to 'the faults of others.'

End of the THIRD VOLUME.